

COLD WAR BROADCASTING



Impact on the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe

A Collection of Studies
and Documents

Edited by

A. Ross Johnson and R. Eugene Parta

Foreword by Timothy Garton Ash

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Table of Contents

Preface by the editors	<i>xi</i>
Foreword by TIMOTHY GARTON ASH	<i>xv</i>
Introduction by A. ROSS JOHNSON	<i>xix</i>
 PART 1: GOALS OF THE BROADCASTS	 <i>1</i>
CHAPTER 1: RFE's Early Years: Evolution of Broadcast Policy and Evidence of Broadcast Impact PAUL B. HENZE	 <i>3</i>
CHAPTER 2: Goals of Radio Liberty GENE SOSIN	<i>17</i>
CHAPTER 3: The Voice of America: A Brief Cold War History ALAN L. HEIL JR.	 <i>25</i>
 PART 2: JAMMING AND AUDIENCES	 <i>49</i>
CHAPTER 4: Cold War Radio Jamming GEORGE W. WOODARD	<i>51</i>
<i>Appendix A: Types of Jamming</i>	<i>64</i>
<i>Appendix B: An Example of a Shortwave Broadcasting Station During the Cold War.</i>	 <i>65</i>
CHAPTER 5: The Audience to Western Broadcasts to the USSR During the Cold War: An External Perspective R. EUGENE PARTA. .	 <i>67</i>
CHAPTER 6: The Foreign Radio Audience in the USSR During the Cold War: An Internal Perspective ELENA I. BASHKIROVA	 <i>103</i>
CHAPTER 7: The Audience to Western Broadcasts to Poland During the Cold War LECHOSLAW GAWLIKOWSKI (with YVETTE NEISSER MORENO)	 <i>121</i>
<i>Appendix C: Weekly Listening Rates for Major Western Broadcasters to Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Bulgaria and the USSR During the Cold War</i>	 <i>142</i>

PART 3: IMPACT OF WESTERN BROADCASTS IN EASTERN EUROPE	145
CHAPTER 8: Radio Free Europe in the Eyes of the Polish Communist Elite JANE LEFTWICH CURRY	147
CHAPTER 9: Polish Regime Countermeasures against Radio Free Europe PAWEŁ MACHCEWICZ.....	169
CHAPTER 10: Radio Free Europe's Impact in Romania During the Cold War NESTOR RATESH	205
CHAPTER 11: Ceaușescu's War against Our Ears GERMINA NAGAT ..	229
CHAPTER 12: Just Noise? Impact of Radio Free Europe in Hungary ISTVÁN RÉV	239
CHAPTER 13: Bulgarian Regime Countermeasures against Radio Free Europe JORDAN BAEV	259
 PART 4: IMPACT OF WESTERN BROADCASTS IN THE USSR	 275
CHAPTER 14: Soviet Reactions to Foreign Broadcasting in the 1950s VLADIMIR TOLZ (with JULIE CORWIN).....	277
CHAPTER 15: Foreign Media, the Soviet Western Frontier, and the Hungarian and Czechoslovak Crises AMIR WEINER.....	299
CHAPTER 16: Water Shaping the Rock: Cold War Broadcasting Impact in Latvia PETER ZVAGULIS.....	319
 PART 5: CONCLUSIONS	 343
CHAPTER 17: Cold War International Broadcasting and the Road to Democracy A. ROSS JOHNSON and R. EUGENE PARTA	345
 PART 6: DOCUMENTS FROM EAST EUROPEAN AND SOVIET ARCHIVES	 351
I. Regime Perceptions of Western Broadcasters	355
Bulgaria	
1: 1977. Interior Ministry Analysis of Foreign Propaganda against Bulgaria.....	357
2: 1986. Interior Ministry Report on the Staff of the Bulgarian Service of RFE.....	362
3: 1989. Bulgarian Politburo Discussion on RFE Monitoring Reports	364

German Democratic Republic	
4: 1970. Stasi Report on West German Government's Attitude to RFE and RL	366
Hungary	
5: 1973. Report to Politburo and Politburo Resolution on Fight against "Imperialist Propaganda"	368
6: 1978. Hungarian Central Committee Discusses Implementation of 1973 Resolution	379
Romania	
7: 1964. Securitate Reports on RFE's Encouragement of Romanian Independence from USSR	391
Poland	
8: 1966. Letter from Army Main Political Administration to Interior Minister on "Hostile" Radio Propaganda	394
9: 1967. Foreign Intelligence Report on RFE	396
10: 1976. Analysis of Western Radio "Propaganda" Directed at Poland.	398
11: 1976. Analysis of Western Radio Coverage of KOR (Committee for the Defense of the Workers)	402
12: 1983. Polish Intelligence Alleges RFE Links to CIA.	405
13: 1988. Information Bulletin for Party Leadership on Western Views of Poland.	407
USSR	
14: 1953. TASS to CPSU on "anti-Soviet Propaganda" of VOA on Death of Lev Mekhlis	409
15: 1953. TASS on Radio Liberation Broadcast to USSR Military in Germany during June 1953 East German Revolt	411
16: 1953. Transcript of VOA Broadcast Citing Radio Liberation Appeal to Soviet Military in Germany	413
17: 1966. Gosteleradio Review of Tactics of Foreign Radio Propaganda.	415
18: 1967. Memo to Central Committee on Propaganda Conducted by Foreign Radio Stations in Russian	425
19: 1968. Memo to Central Committee on Western Radio Propaganda against the USSR	431
20: 1968. KGB Report to Central Committee on RL Policy Guidelines	433
II. Regime Countermeasures against Western Broadcasters	439
Soviet Bloc	
21: 1976. Bloc Intelligence Organs Take Joint Countermeasures against RFE and RL	441

22: 1976. Bulgarian Interior Ministry Account of Meeting in Prague	447
23: 1978. Bulgarian Gen. Stoyanov Meets KGB Gen. Bobkov to Discuss RFE and RL	450
24: 1979. Bulgarian and Czech Interior Ministries Plan to Cooperate against Foreign Propaganda	453
25: 1980. Statements by KGB Chairman and Polish and Czech Interior Ministers during Bloc Meeting on Western Radio	456
26: 1981. Minutes of Meeting between Czechoslovak and Hungarian Interior Ministry Officials on the Carlos Terrorist Group and RFE Bomb Attack	462
27: 1985. Bulgarian Interior Minister Visits Moscow to Coordinate Activities against Foreign Propaganda Operations.	467
Bulgaria	
28: 1977. Bulgaria Gets Help from KGB to Fight “Ideological Subversion”	469
29: 1979. Bulgarian Cooperation with KGB against “Subversive Centers”	472
30: 1979. Interior Ministry Note on Actions against Western Radio	474
Czechoslovakia	
31: 1956. Politburo Resolution on Plan to Counter “Reactionary” Exiles	476
32: 1975. Interior Ministry Note on Actions of Agent Minařík against RFE	480
33: 1969. Report to CPSU Central Committee on Visit of Czech Delegation to Discuss Countering Enemy Propaganda in Czechoslovakia	483
Hungary	
34: 1963. Report to Politburo on Jamming of Western Radio	487
35: 1963. Minutes of Politburo Meeting on Jamming of Western Radio	494
Poland	
36: 1953. Polish Proposal for Bloc-wide Coordination of Jamming.	501
37: 1953. Interior Ministry Report on Intercepted Letters Sent to RFE Cover Addresses	504
38: 1972. Gierek Calls for Offensive Action against “Centers of Subversion”	506
39: 1983. RFE Linked to CIA at Trial in Absentia of Zdzisław Najder.	509
40: 1983. Military Court Passes Death Sentence on Zdzisław Najder.	511

41: 1984. Central Committee Analysis of Western Propaganda and Recommended Countermeasures	513
42: 1985. Interior Ministry Report on Information Leaked to RFE on Catholic Church	518
USSR	
43: 1951. Report on Western Broadcasts to Poland and Council of Ministers Decree on Jamming the Broadcasts	520
44: 1957. Letter to Khrushchev from Radio Moscow German-Language Service Urging Creation of Warsaw Pact Radio Station Analogous to RFE	528
45: 1958. Report to Central Committee about Press Conference on "Subversive Activities" of Western Radios	531
46: 1959. KGB Report on Uneven Quality of Jamming of Western Broadcasts	533
47: 1960. Central Committee Analysis of Western Radio Propaganda, Decree to Combat it, and Implementation Responses from Latvia, Estonia and Uzbekistan	537
48: 1963. Minutes of Presidium Meeting on Restricting Soviet Shortwave Receivers	552
49: 1965. Memo to CC CPSU from Turkmen CC on Extending Turkmen Foreign Broadcasting	555
50: 1971. Report by KGB Chairman Andropov on RFE and RL . . .	557
51: 1986. Memo to Central Committee from Politburo Members Ligachev and Chebrikov on Jamming of Western Radio Stations	560
Contributors	563
Glossary	565
Index	569

Preface

Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty were, along with other Western broadcasters, effective instruments of Western policy during the Cold War. Previous studies have examined the history and organization of RFE/RL and its place in American national security strategy. Major publications include Sig Mickelson, *America's Other Voice: The Story of Radio Free Europe & Radio Liberty* (Praeger, 1983), James Critchlow, *Radio Hole-in-the-Head/Radio Liberty* (American University Press, 1995), Michael Nelson, *War of the Black Heavens: The Battles of Western Broadcasting in the Cold War* (Syracuse University Press, 1997), Gene Sosin, *Sparks of Liberty: An Insider's Memoir of Radio Liberty* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), Arch Puddington, *Broadcasting Freedom: The Cold War Triumph of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty* (University of Kentucky Press, 2000), and Alan Heil, *The Voice of America: A History* (Columbia University Press, 2003).

What has been lacking until now are studies of the impact of Western Cold War broadcasting, on both societies and Communist regimes, that draw on archival material from the other side of the former Iron Curtain.

This book examines the role of Western broadcasting to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe during the Cold War, with a focus on Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty. It includes chapters by radio veterans and by scholars who have conducted research on the subject in once-secret Soviet bloc archives and in Western records. It also contains a selection of translated documents from formerly secret Soviet and East European archives, most of them published here for the first time.

Much of the material in this volume was originally presented at a conference, "Cold War Broadcasting Impact," held at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University in October 2004. That conference was co-sponsored by the Hoover Institution and the Cold War International

History Project (CWIHP) of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, with assistance from the Center for Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies, Stanford University, and the Open Society Archives, Budapest. The Annenberg Foundation Trust at Sunnyslands and the Bernard Osher Foundation provided generous financial support.

In preparation for the Hoover-CWIHP conference, documents about Western broadcasting impact were collected from Communist-era East European, Baltic, and Russian archives. These materials include Communist Party Politburo and Central Committee discussions of broadcasting impact and propaganda countermeasures, secret police assessments and efforts to penetrate the Western broadcasters, directives on jamming, secret audience surveys, Party and censorship office press guidance on countering the broadcasts, and assessments of the impact on the Communist armies. Documentation was collected by the CWIHP's network of archive scholars in the region, with assistance from the Open Society Archives. A Hoover Institution oral history project conducted by Jane Leftwich Curry interviewed key Polish Communist officials about broadcast impact. These materials complement the extensive RFE/RL corporate records and broadcast archives now located at the Hoover Institution (<http://hooverferl.stanford.edu/>) and related materials in the RFE/RL research archive now located at the Open Society Archive (www.osa-archivum.org).

The Hoover-CWIHP conference brought together experts from the West and former Communist countries who presented papers based on this archival documentation. Veteran Western broadcasting officials and leading former Communist officials and dissidents also participated.¹ The combination of new documentation, international expertise, and oral history, which has been expanded and revised for this volume, offers new insights into one of the most important Western instruments of the Cold War.

The editors are indebted to many individuals for their contributions to this volume. At the Hoover Institution, Elena Danielson (former Associate Director and Director of Library and Archives) first suggested the conference and supported it throughout. We thank John Raisian, Director of the Hoover Institution, and Richard Sousa, Senior Associate Direc-

¹ A summary of the conference proceedings, prepared by rapporteur Gregory Mitrovich, was published as *Cold War Broadcasting Impact* (Hoover Institution, 2005).

tor and Director of the Library and Archives, for their support. Anatol Shmelev, Blanka Pasternak, and Maciej Siekierski of the Hoover Archives assisted in many ways.

At the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Christian Ostermann, director of the CWIHP, co-sponsored the conference. CWIHP associate Mircea Munteanu and CWIHP's network of Central and East European scholars and Washington staff located documents and translated many of them.

István Rév, Director of the Open Society Archives, and his associates helped locate documents and facilitated publication of this book. Michael Nelson, author of *War of the Black Heavens*, generously made available for publication documents he obtained from Russian Federation archives and deposited at the National Security Archive.

Patricia Leroy, former reports editor of RFE/RL's SAAOR office in Paris, ably served as copy editor for the manuscript.

The editors' work on this book was supported by Johnson's research fellowship and Parta's Osher fellowship at the Hoover Institution. Preparation of the final edited volume was supported by the Hoover Institution with Annenberg Foundation and other Hoover funds.

A. ROSS JOHNSON and R. EUGENE PARTA, editors

Foreword

In a tumbledown farmhouse in the poorest corner of south-eastern Poland, at the height of the Solidarity revolution of 1980-81, I met a farmer who had just sold some home-woven baskets in order to buy a radio. He had bought it to keep himself informed about the farmers' Solidarity strike by listening to Radio Free Europe. "There it stands on the rickety table" I noted, "apart from the electric light and the wooden wall clock (permanently telling twenty minutes to eight) the only object in the room which could not have been there a hundred years ago." Another farmer said, "they taught me at school that it was forbidden to listen to Radio Free Europe, but how can we know what's going on in the country when our press, radio and television lie?"

Anyone who traveled through central and eastern Europe under communism understood the immense importance of western shortwave radio broadcasting to those countries. It is, however, remarkable to find its impact documented in such detail, as this book does, from official and secret sources. The sheer numbers of those who listened are extraordinary: up to two-thirds of the Polish population in 1981, more than fifty percent of the Soviet urban population in the early 1980s, according to estimates given here. What is more, according to internal official surveys, well over two-thirds of those asked in Poland believed that Radio Free Europe was "reliable." A daily complete transcript of its news and political content was made available to the Politburo. Across the whole region, and in the Soviet Union, there was extensive jamming—the tribute that vice pays to virtue. And who could wish for a nicer compliment than the East German spymaster Markus Wolf saying, in his memoirs, "Of all the various means used to influence people against the East during the Cold War, I would count Radio Free Europe as the most effective."

This book examines the work of Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty and the Voice of America in a rigorous, detailed comparative framework, drawing on a wide range of sources in many countries. It will be an invaluable resource for anyone interested in the history of communism and the Cold War. At the end, the editors draw some important general lessons for those seeking to impart reliable information to people living in unfree countries. One hopes that these lessons will be noted by journalists and policymakers today. However, it is hard to imagine that any single medium will ever again have the singular importance that short wave radio broadcasting had in central and eastern Europe during the Cold War. Today, the myriad resources of the Internet, Twitter, Facebook, SMS messages, email and satellite television all compete for the citizen's attention. Then, the "noise" with which western broadcasts competed was mainly the noise of deliberate jamming by a single totalitarian regime; now, while there is still jamming, blocking and filtering by authoritarian regimes, there is also the "noise" of thousands of competing channels of communication, media, and sources of entertainment and distraction.

History never repeats itself. One should try to learn from it nonetheless. This is an excellent place to start.

TIMOTHY GARTON ASH
Oxford, June 2010

Introduction

A. ROSS JOHNSON

Part One of this book, “Goals of the Broadcasts,” reviews the origins and development of RFE and RL, and the complementary development of the Voice of America. These chapters were written by participants in the events described.

The subsequent sections were provided by an international group of scholars, drawing on once-closed East European and Soviet archives to analyze the impact of the broadcasts.

Part Two, “Jamming and Audiences,” reviews Soviet-bloc efforts to block RFE/RL’s broadcasts with jamming. (Appendix A cites types of jamming, and Appendix B provides an example of a shortwave broadcasting station.) The Radios nevertheless had large listenerships, as is demonstrated in the chapters on Soviet and Polish audiences, based on external and once-secret internal polling data. (Appendix C presents East European and Soviet listener data; additional Soviet data are included in Chapter Five.)

Part Three examines the impact of the broadcasts in four East European countries. Part Four addresses their impact in the USSR. In Part Five, the editors suggest reasons for the impact of the broadcasts. Part Six contains translated documents from the Soviet and East European archives that help explain the impact of the broadcasts.

In Chapter One, Paul B. Henze, RFE deputy political advisor in the 1950s, outlines RFE’s evolution in the 1950s from a sideshow of the Free Europe Committee, created to give East European exiles something constructive to do, into “surrogate radios”—substitute full-service national radio stations—for Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, and Romania. Henze notes that RFE was jerry-built, like an airplane being constructed in flight; along the way it became not only an influential broadcaster but a primary source of information for all Western observ-

ers of Eastern Europe. RFE and RL were able to draw on the experience of RIAS (Radio in the American Sector of Berlin) which—as Christian Ostermann suggested to the Hoover-CWIHP conference—had become a “surrogate” radio for East Germans.¹ But Henze cautions that times and technology have changed irreversibly since the Cold War, and it is unrealistic to expect RFE-like broadcasting impact today.

In Chapter Two, Gene Sosin, a long-time RL policy official, traces RL’s evolution from agitator to adviser: from a voice calling for overthrow of the regime from within to a putative guest in the home. RL called on the advice of leading Western Sovietologists of the day and talented Soviet émigrés of the 1970s to provide listeners with “forbidden fruit”: the banned writings of Soviet authors, starting with Boris Pasternak, along with intellectual stimulation from the cream of Western thinkers. As a “Soviet” radio, it amplified dissident voices from the USSR, and could critique negative aspects of American life in a manner not possible for VOA. It became, in Sosin’s words, “a loudspeaker of uncensored Soviet public opinion that championed civil and human rights and artistic freedom.” But some anti-democratic and anti-Western material made its way into RL broadcasts in the late 1970s and early 1980s, demonstrating the constant challenge of reconciling émigré broadcaster initiative and American policy control.

In Chapter Three, Alan Heil, a longtime VOA official, addresses the differences and similarities between VOA and RFE and RL. In the early 1950s VOA broadcasts to the Soviet bloc, like those of RL, often contained simplistic programs and vitriolic attacks that detracted from their credibility. VOA’s adoption of hard-line policies to promote President Truman’s Campaign of Truth did not spare it from McCarthyite charges of being soft on Communism. Later, VOA promulgated a Charter (enacted into law by the Congress) that described its mission as representing America in its diversity and presenting US policies and responsible discussion of them, while specifying that this required VOA news to be “accurate, objective, and comprehensive.” Yet the Charter did not spare VOA from political interference in the 1960s, including bans on the text of Solzhenitsyn’s *Gulag Archipelago* and on a proposed series on corruption in Communist parties—subjects viewed by US policymakers as interference in internal Soviet affairs by the “official” US Radio, and by implication properly left to RL and RFE. As Heil recounts, over time the

¹ *Cold War Broadcasting Impact*, 18.

VOA granted additional programming authority to its language services, following the model of effective country-specific programming pioneered by RFE and RL. True to its mission, VOA continued to carry reports on the United States that differentiated it from RFE and RL, such as its “voices of America” series from the American heartland in the 1980s. But it also covered the emerging general crisis within the Soviet bloc from the ground up, not unlike RFE and RL, and on occasion, especially in the case of Czechoslovakia in the mid-1980s, it was able to do a better job of this and (uniquely in Eastern Europe at the time) gain a larger audience than RFE.²

(It is noteworthy that the BBC World Service underwent a parallel evolution, as traced by Eugeniusz Smolar, the former head of the BBC Polish Service, at the Hoover-CWIHP conference. A centralized organization consciously distancing itself from local involvement in the early Cold War years, the BBC decentralized in the 1970s. It too developed country-specific reporting which sought to combine BBC’s legendary “objectivity” with emanation of the values of a free society.³)

Part Two contains studies of the RFE and RL audiences and the attempt of the Communist regimes to limit listenership through technical interference (jamming). In Chapter Four, George Woodard, former director of engineering for RFE/RL, provides a primer on the science of short-wave broadcasting and jamming. Broadcasting was offense and jamming was defense; the offense was able to overcome the defense with transmitter power, simultaneous broadcasting on multiple frequencies, the technical advantage of broadcasting from the geographic West, and above all the commitment and skill of listeners who sought out locations where the signal was stronger and switched frequencies to find the clearest channel.

In Chapter Five, co-editor R. Eugene Parta (former director of audience research at RFE/RL) summarizes results of extensive traveler surveys organized by RFE/RL to measure the Soviet audience to Western broadcasts. Necessarily a second-best approach, since normal surveys in the Soviet Union were precluded, traveler surveys indicated a regular weekly Soviet audience for Western broadcasts by 1989 of some 50 million, a quarter of the adult population. After jamming was ended, RL

² Oldrich Tuma, director of the Czech Institute of Contemporary History, provided details of VOA’s role in Czechoslovakia in the 1980s to the Hoover-CWIHP conference (*Cold War Broadcasting Impact*, 24–25).

³ *Cold War Broadcasting Impact*, 17.

reached seventeen percent of the adult population, predominantly educated urban residents. These figures, and comparable data for Eastern Europe, understate the reach of RL and RFE, since listeners regularly told others what they had heard. The validity of the RFE/RL results were later confirmed by retrospective surveys carried out after 1991 in the former USSR, and by release of once-secret surveys conducted by Soviet social scientists. Additional data on listener attitudes indicated that listeners tuned to RL for information about the USSR and the world and tended to be skeptical of the official Soviet line. Western broadcasts provided an informational lifeline, giving hope to, and maintaining a dialogue with, elements of the Soviet population open to change.

In Chapter Six, Elena I. Bashkistrova, formerly a sociologist at the Soviet Academy of Sciences, now president of a Moscow-based survey research firm, discusses once-secret Soviet surveys of listenership to Western broadcasts. Internal surveys of major urban centers conducted by Soviet social scientists indicated that in the 1980s Western radio broadcasts had a mass audience, reaching more than half of the urban population (and nearly a quarter of that population regularly). Listeners sought independent information; they were also attracted to entertainment programs which led them to political programs as well. Listenership was highest in Western borderlands which had only been incorporated into the USSR after World War II and were more exposed to Western media.

In Chapter Seven, Lechosław Gawlikowski, former deputy director of the RFE Polish Service, compares the results of RFE/RL audience research conducted among Polish travelers with data from once-secret internal Polish surveys conducted by Polish Radio (OBOP) and the Military-Political Academy (WAP). OBOP and WAP data were most reliable for the “Solidarity” years, 1979–1982, and generally validate RFE/RL audience research results that showed a total audience in 1981 of 66 percent of the adult population, and a regular weekly audience almost as large. Even in non-crisis periods, RFE had a mass audience in Poland, which tuned in for information not available elsewhere, trusted what it heard, but often compared it with other foreign and domestic sources.

Part Three is devoted to the impact of Western broadcasting in Eastern Europe. In Chapter Eight, Jane Leftwich Curry, professor of political science at Santa Clara University, analyzes RFE’s impact on the Polish Communist leadership and broader elite, based on oral interviews with some forty former Communist regime officials. For the Polish regime, RFE was the “elephant in the room,” and almost a fifth branch of govern-

ment. RFE's information from and about Poland was a constant reminder that the Polish People's Republic had failed to win the allegiance of the Polish people. The response of the Polish Communist elite was a masterpiece of cognitive dissonance. On the one hand, it professed to minimize the importance of an information medium so at odds with its own values. On the other hand, it devoted substantial resources to countering that medium, relied on it for information about Poland and the world that its own censored media and government apparatus could not provide, reacted to its revelations (notably in abolishing part of the internal security apparatus after the broadcasts of Józef Światło), and occasionally sought to feed it information to advance personal positions in intra-Party conflict. What the Polish Communist elite could never do was ignore RFE.

In Chapter Nine, Paweł Machcewicz, formerly director of research at the Polish Institute of National Remembrance (IPN), draws extensively on Interior Ministry archives to provide a detailed history of Polish regime efforts to jam RFE broadcasts and arrest those guilty of spreading "hostile propaganda" inside Poland. Machcewicz documents the weakening of the Stalinist security apparatus as a result of the Światło broadcasts, and the realistic analysis by the successors of the Polish Stalinists that, in 1956, RFE had backed Gomułka as a lesser evil than Soviet intervention. But, as the Gomułka regime became more authoritarian, it again treated RFE as an enemy, recruiting agents within the organization, and attempting by means of both pressure and propaganda to stop the flow of information from Poland to RFE. Diplomatic and intelligence efforts by the Polish regime to counter RFE were strongest in the early 1970s, when it sought to provide ammunition to opponents of the Radios in West Germany and the United States. Since these were the years of relative social peace under Party leader Gierek, this indicates just how threatening the Communist authorities viewed the free flow of information from RFE—and how insecure they felt about their control of Poland.

Nestor Ratesh, former director of the RFE Romanian Service, and Germina Nagat, a researcher at the Romanian National Council for the Study of the Securitate Archive, analyze RFE's impact in Romania in Chapters Ten and Eleven. RFE had a larger audience in Romania than any other East European country. This can be ascribed to the Ceaușescu regime's abolition of jamming in 1963, to the bareness of domestic media and its incessant celebration of the Ceaușescu family, and to a constant flow of letters from Romania that helped make broadcasts a continuous dialogue with the audience. As Ceaușescu tightened his control over Ro-

mania in the 1970s, he targeted RFE as a major threat to his rule, and ordered the Securitate to harass and even kill RFE Romanian broadcasters. Ratesh provides evidence that Ceaușescu engaged the international terrorist Carlos to bomb RFE's Munich headquarters in 1981. Ceaușescu simultaneously established the "Ether" unit within the Securitate, charged, as Nagat documents, with identifying, isolating, and punishing not just listeners but, absurdly, even potential listeners to RFE.

In Chapter Twelve, István Rév (director of the Open Society Archives in Budapest) reminds us of Marshall McLuhan's observation that radio is an intimate and uniquely private medium, "a whisper in the ear," a dialogue with one's self,⁴ that stimulates fantasy and feeds hope. Most discussions of jamming treat it as simply an effort by Communist regimes to block Western information. Rév argues that, "The sound that the East European jammers generated did not simply aim at making the enemy broadcasts inaudible; the noise also established and confirmed the presence of the Communist authorities in the air, and thus in the private sphere of the secret listener." In 1956, the disappearance of jamming "noise" may have encouraged Hungarians, more than anything else, to think that Western help was on the way. Likewise, restoration of jamming in Spring 1957 was an unmistakable indication that the old system had returned. While the Hungarian people went on listening through the jamming, top Party officials received both summary transcripts and analytic reports from their monitoring services. Like the Polish Party, at the end of the 1960s, the Hungarian Party established a special unit devoted to coordinating regime responses to Western broadcasts and other "hostile propaganda."

In Chapter Thirteen, Jordan Baev, professor at the Bulgarian National Defense Academy, documents the Bulgarian regime's heightened countermeasures against RFE in the 1970s, when the broadcasts first began to have real impact by featuring commentaries by former regime insiders Petar Semerdjiev, Georgi Markov and Vladimir Kostov. The increased impact and the resulting countermeasures continued throughout the 1980s, as internal opposition developed and RFE was able to interview Bulgarian dissidents on the air. Bulgarian Interior Ministry archive documents reviewed by Baev contain extensive exchanges of information with the other Soviet-bloc states on RFE, and point to Bulgarian regime complicity in the assassination of RFE broadcaster Georgi Markov

⁴ I am indebted to Kevin Klose for this description.

in 1978. (Apart from the Munich bombing and the physical assaults on broadcasters instigated by Ceaușescu, this was the only known case of regime-ordered physical violence against RFE and RL associates since the 1950s.)

Part Four is devoted to the impact of Western broadcasts in the USSR. In Chapter Fourteen, Vladimir Tolz, RFE/RL Russian-service broadcaster and historian, draws on Soviet archives to paint a portrait of Stalin and other 1950s Soviet leaders as obsessed with what Western broadcasters in various languages were saying about them. Transcripts of broadcasts about individual Soviet leaders were distributed selectively as a weapon in intra-Party struggle. For example, Western broadcasts containing material alleging that Marshal Zhukov was striving for power were distributed to certain top leaders—but not to Zhukov; while negative material about Khrushchev was distributed to Zhukov and others—but not to Khrushchev. Many transcripts were translated from broadcast languages other than Russian, demonstrating the impact of broadcasts in world languages other than Russian on the top Soviet leadership. It was the Kremlin audience that was arguably the most important during this early period; a mass audience developed only after the 1950s, as the reality of Soviet life, the improved content of Western broadcasts, and Soviet counterpropaganda all drew listeners to Western broadcasts as an alternative to the highly controlled Soviet media. Radio Liberty (heavily jammed, and with limited transmitter power until 1958) played little role in the 1950s; that would come in the 1970s and 1980s when, as former KGB counterintelligence chief Oleg Kalugin suggested, RL influenced the Soviet political elite more than any other parts of Soviet society.⁵

In Chapter Fifteen, Amir Weiner, professor of history at Stanford University, reinforces the point made by Elena I. Bashkirova in Chapter Six that Western broadcasts had an eager audience in the Soviet “Western territories”—the Baltic states, Western Ukraine, Moldova⁶—that had been incorporated at the end of World War II, and which contained non-Russian populations with recent memories of non-Soviet sovereignty. VOA broadcasts were most important during the 1950s and 1960s, though domestic Finnish broadcasts were widely heard in Estonia. (RFE/RL began broadcasting in the Baltic languages only in 1975.) During the

⁵ Cold War Broadcasting Impact, 34.

⁶ For the sake of simplicity, post-Soviet spellings have been used throughout for the names of former Soviet republics.

Polish–Hungarian crises of 1956 and the Czechoslovak crisis of 1968, the temporarily freer East European media also penetrated the region, allowing national minorities to draw their own interpretations of the upheavals across the border. Foreign broadcasts provided political and cultural elites, especially in the Western territories, with constant reminders of a sovereign non-Soviet past, social and political injustices, and geographical and cultural proximity to alternative ways of life. They helped prepare the way for political and national self-assertion in the Gorbachev era of *perestroika*.

Peter Zvagulis, a former director of the RFE/RL Latvian Service, documents the situation in Latvia in Chapter Sixteen, drawing on Latvian KGB and other archival sources, and on interviews with former officials. Latvian Communist authorities took seriously the impact of Western broadcasts on society and, like other Soviet-bloc regimes, organized a series of countermeasures. They carefully monitored the broadcasts, supplementing locally the all-Union monitoring operation in Moscow described by Tolz in Chapter Fourteen. They organized jamming and counter-propaganda. They prosecuted listeners. Despite their efforts, as elsewhere in the Soviet bloc, Western broadcasts kept hope alive and helped prepare the way for political change. Regime allegations that RFE and RL were funded by the CIA—continuing long after this was in fact the case—only increased their attraction for many listeners.

In Part Five, the editors summarize evidence that Western broadcasts had a significant impact in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. We caution that the audiences to Western broadcasting during the Cold War period, who identified with the goals of the broadcasters and were receptive to the messages they conveyed, were living in an environment that was poor in information—a condition that does not apply to most of the world today. But we list other factors that help explain the success of Cold War broadcasting and suggest that these should inform contemporary American efforts to reach and influence foreign populations. Perhaps the most important of these is the requirement that broadcasts be both *credible and relevant to their audiences*. As one RFE Broadcast Service Director said in 1958: “We are broadcasting to convince our audience. We must approach them in such a way so as to seem credible and convincing to them.” The point was emphasized at the Hoover-CWIHP conference by former RFE Director J.F. Brown, who pointed out that radio listeners lived in a system that bred suspicion of everyone and everything, and that only through accurate and judicious broadcasting could

RFE and RL overcome these reservations and build a reputation for honesty and accuracy.⁷

Part Six contains whole or partial translations of documents from formerly closed Soviet and East European archives. The documents provide first-hand evidence of the extent to which the Communist regimes during the Cold War considered Western broadcasting to be a threat to their rule.

⁷ *Cold War Broadcasting Impact*, 12.

Part 1

GOALS OF THE BROADCASTS

CHAPTER 1

RFE's Early Years: Evolution of Broadcast Policy and Evidence of Broadcast Impact

PAUL B. HENZE

Since the liberation of Eastern Europe and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the effectiveness of Radio Free Europe broadcasts has never been questioned. Testimony on the impact of the broadcasts has come repeatedly from the new leaders of Eastern Europe, and from millions of citizens who began listening in the 1950s. I have talked to many former listeners who recall the details of specific broadcasts and the circumstances under which they listened. Many remember the names of broadcast personalities they listened to. Partly as a result of this, what could almost be termed a mythology has developed about RFE's effectiveness, and the foresight that guided its founding and operation. It is flattering to those of us who were involved in the early period of the organization to be credited with so much wisdom, but it is far from justified. What we do deserve credit for is the fact that we took advantage of the opportunity offered to us to build an effective broadcasting project that was undertaken in spite of obstacles and skepticism.

Radio Free Europe was an experiment. It was jerry-built. Its success was far from fore-ordained. The early years of its operation were never trouble-free. It faced many difficulties, some inherent in the operation itself, some the result of bureaucratic factors, many caused by doubts about—even strong opposition to—the notion of radio broadcasts as a means of communicating with peoples that had been forcibly incorporated into the Soviet Empire and isolated from the outer world with no immediate prospect of an improvement in their situation. The early history of RFE needs to be better understood as background for current radio broadcasting ventures. None of these is likely to repeat the success of RFE broadcasts to Eastern Europe, for times and technology have changed drastically and irreversibly.

When the National Committee for Free Europe (NCFE), soon renamed the Free Europe Committee (FEC), was formed in 1949, radio broadcasting was not envisioned as an important aspect of its activity. To the eminent men of affairs who founded the organization with White House and State Department encouragement, the FEC was primarily a device for taking care of left-over East European political leaders who had set up exile governments during WWII and been left high and dry at the end of the war, after the Soviets took over their countries. They were respectable men who had served their countries well and been supportive of Allied war aims. Many of them hoped they might soon be enabled to return home. Some of them nursed the illusory hope that communist domination of Eastern Europe might not last much longer than Nazi occupation. Meanwhile something had to be done for these men, who had become an embarrassment and a burden to the US Government, especially the State Department. They needed to be given something constructive to do.

A major consideration in establishing the FEC was to create an opportunity to keep them busy. The modest staff which the FEC assembled in New York first decided that these exiled East Europeans could be more effective in opposing communist domination of their homelands if they could be persuaded to set partisan differences aside and form united "national committees" that would inspire people under communist domination to resist. So the initial FEC thrust was to persuade each exile group to form a broadly representative national council representing the entire political spectrum except the two extremes: Nazi collaborators and Communists. Much negotiating was done and numerous meetings held in America and Europe during the early 1950s, but the few national councils that emerged never attracted great enthusiasm among the exiles, and did not have the capacity to do anything worthwhile with respect to the occupied countries. Almost all of them became irrelevant by the end of the 1950s. The FEC lost interest in them.

The FEC came into being with a strong sense of activism and was encouraged by the US Government. If exile national committees were ineffective, other ways of keeping the exiles busy accomplishing something had to be found. Exiles could do research and it could be publicized. A Mid-European Studies Center was set up and former diplomats and political leaders wrote memoirs and analyses. A Free Europe Press was set up to distribute reports to newspapers, and began to issue a monthly magazine, *News from Behind the Iron Curtain*. Some of the exiles had

been involved in broadcasting to their home countries during World War II, which was how the idea of radio broadcasts to Communist-dominated countries arose. Broadcasts by exiles could help keep up morale in their homelands, as they had done during the Nazi occupation. Radio Free Europe came into being largely as an afterthought to the impetus that led to the establishment of the Free Europe organization. There is little evidence that the initial small-scale broadcasts over weak transmitters had much impact when they began on 4 July 1950. Had it not been for the outbreak of the Korean War less than two weeks previously, they might never have developed into the formidable organization that became Radio Free Europe.

The repeated aggressive actions of the Soviet Union had already jolted some Americans into thinking seriously about broadcasting. The invasion of South Korea by the North was the culminating factor. The Korean War shocked the Truman Administration in much the way 9/11 shocked the second Bush Administration half a century later. Continued debate about the nature of the Soviet threat was no longer relevant. The threat was recognized as real, and the important question was how to respond to it. The response was rapid. Energetic men who had had experience of WWII propaganda broadcasting were given free rein to plan. They developed the concept of round-the-clock home-service type broadcasts and were given the means to organize them. The US Government made resources available to build transmitters that could reach the target areas. Considering the bureaucratic obstacles which complicate any quick response to a challenge today, it is amazing how rapidly the large-scale Radio Free Europe operation came into being. Full-scale broadcasts to Czechoslovakia began in May 1951 over what was at that time a powerful medium-wave transmitter, located near Munich. At the same time a major shortwave transmitting base was constructed in Portugal and programming was relayed there from Germany. By October 1951 full-scale broadcasts to Hungary began and, in the spring of 1952, broadcasts to Poland were inaugurated on the great national anniversary commemorating the Constitution of the Third of May 1791.

Almost all the planning that went into the creation of RFE was an improvised response to the sense of urgency that prevailed in the early 1950s concerning the threat which Stalinist aggressive expansionism represented for the United States and the Free World. The notion that RFE resulted from a coherent concept of what needed to be done has become widespread in recent years, but it remains an illusion. Nevertheless, the

establishment of this operation and its subsequent evolution remains a tribute to the kind of initiative of which Americans, at their best, are capable.

RFE broadcasting policy and practices evolved piecemeal during the early years.¹ The situation of each target country was different because of its history and World War II experiences. Certain basic principles nevertheless applied to all broadcasting units:

- Saturation home-service broadcasting, encompassing all fields of interest to audiences, including religion, sports, culture, entertainment: in other words duplication of what a free home service would be if the target countries were not under Communist control.
- Concentration on subjects important for people in the homeland; avoidance of preoccupation with exile concerns, and the political polemics and debate about political rivalries of earlier periods.
- Avoidance of preaching, invective, incitement to violence; no promises of imminent liberation.
- Detailed reporting on “problems of Communism”: analysis of the workings of the Soviet system, reporting on communism worldwide, coverage of contradictions and disagreements within Communist hierarchies in target countries, provision of information crucial to the oligarchies dominating Eastern Europe and valuable for the population as a whole.
- Programs describing the operation of open, democratic societies in the West that were designed to sustain the aspirations of East Europeans to rejoin Europe.
- Programs about the life of exile communities and kindred ethnic communities in the United States and Europe.

¹ I discuss this development in two papers, “Recollections of Radio Free Europe: Its Evolution in the 1950s and the Hungarian Revolution” (prepared for a conference on Hungary and the World, 1956: The New Archival Evidence, Budapest, September 26–29, 1996); and “Radio Free Europe’s Early Years: Reflections On Broadcasting To Poland,” (prepared for the celebration in Warsaw in 2002 of the 50th anniversary of RFE Polish broadcasting from Munich), and published as “Wczesne lata Radia Wolna Europa: refleksje na temat nadawania program radiowego do Polski,” in *50 lat Rosgłośni Polskiej Radio Wolna Europa*, ed. Daria Nałęcz (Warsaw: Polish State Archives, 2002), 97–107.

All of the above seems obvious and simple in retrospect. It was far from obvious at the time—and never simple. Within the CIA² an impatient group advocated provocative and denunciatory broadcasting and encouraged like-minded staff members in the FEC. Some members of the FEC Board had their own particular hobby-horses. On the other hand, some State Department officers questioned the desirability of any broadcasting at all, out of fear that it would encourage unrealistic expectations among East Europeans and perhaps spark futile revolts. American embassies in target countries were for the most part unenthusiastic about broadcasts because they provoked repeated protests from the Communist governments to which they were accredited and created discomfort for diplomats. Prominent exiles with good contacts within the US Government, and particularly in Congress, resented being given only a minor role in broadcasting. In Germany, expellees from Eastern Europe opposed broadcasts and protested the presence in RFE of persons who were in some cases accused of having been responsible for the expulsions.

As I look back upon the early RFE years nothing strikes me more than the extent to which the radio, from its beginnings, operated in a framework of openness, almost entirely devoid of clandestinity. Since there was no source of money other than the US Government to cover the rapid establishment of a headquarters in Munich, the hiring of a staff within a few months, the construction of transmitters in Germany and Portugal, and substantial operating expenses, the FEC created the Crusade for Freedom, a subsidiary which purported to gather the money necessary to support the radio from foundations, corporate donations and public fund-raising efforts. It quickly built up a nationwide structure with volunteer committees throughout the United States. There was apparently some expectation that the Crusade might eventually be able to gather sufficient funding to cover the major expenses of broadcasting. Annual fund-raising campaigns were inaugurated with Presidential blessing. Of course, the costs of saturation radio broadcasts always exceeded donations, which themselves cost a good deal to raise. Nevertheless the activi-

² The CIA had little impact on development of broadcasting policy, for the CIA officials who provided funding and bureaucratic support (for example, security clearances) recognized that it was best to let the FEC develop operations and manage them without direct governmental inference. The eminent men who made up the FEC itself would have agreed to no other arrangement.

ties of the Crusade helped maintain the openness that became a hallmark of RFE's operations.³

There were many cross currents and contradictions in attitudes toward the radio. One of the most troublesome early accusations made against RFE's broadcasts was the allegation that they were insufficiently anti-Communist. Aside from individuals who had been collaborators during the Nazi occupation, known Communists and erstwhile Communist collaborators, who were never hired, American managers encouraged broadcasting chiefs to assemble staffs representing a wide range of talent and interests and a broad spectrum of legitimate political opinion, ruling out only the extreme right and extreme left. Socialist parties had been important in many East European countries, so, of course, some former socialists were hired. Rightist exiles and German expellees from Czechoslovakia and Poland were particularly critical of socialists. The situation varied from one broadcasting element to another depending on the previous history of the country and its wartime experience.⁴ Sudeten Germans, politically the most active expellees in Germany (especially in Bavaria), harbored strong resentments of Czech socialists. Slovak separatists who had supported the Nazi-era semi-independent Slovak state shared much of this resentment; some would have preferred RFE to champion Slovak separatism. In the case of Hungary and Romania, on the other hand, exiles employed by RFE were sometimes accused of sympathy with pseudo-fascist political movements that had been influential before and during WWII.

RFE had to contend with complicated—and often contradictory—criticism from many quarters.⁵ Much of it came to a head during the hear-

³ The Crusade served other useful purposes. It provided an ostensible buffer between the FEC and the US Government. It reinforced the image of the FEC/RFE with the German and Portuguese governments, as well as other friendly governments, as a private organization. Broadcasts explained it as evidence of broad popular support in the United States for the restoration of freedom in the target countries.

⁴ See "Radio Free Europe's Early Years: Reflections On Broadcasting To Poland," *op. cit.*, for details of the Polish situation.

⁵ RFE avoided entanglement in East European boundary and minority problems by taking the position that states and borders as recognized by the US Government would be accepted *de facto* as valid until the peoples of these countries were free to negotiate adjustments themselves at some future date.

ings of the Kersten Committee⁶ in Munich in the summer of 1953, when exile and German critics saw an opportunity to press Congress to interfere in RFE operations. Some of the same critics had already inspired attacks on RFE during the McCarthy era for allegedly being soft on communism. Neither these attacks nor the accusations made before the Kersten Committee resulted in permanent damage to RFE because it was protected from American political interference by strong support from the White House, and by its covert funding by CIA through the Crusade for Freedom.

RFE had many administrative and managerial problems. There were times when they came close to causing the operation to collapse. Responsibilities between Munich and New York were not clearly defined until the 1960s and led to much strain between exiles as well as Americans. American employees of the radio were a very motley group, some with WWII military experience, many from US broadcasting and journalistic media, some from academia, a few from retirees from the Foreign Service and related US Government agencies. Turnover was fairly high. Engineering and technical personnel were for the most part hired in Germany. Exiles came with many kinds of status, many with refugee and temporary residence documents that necessitated frequent travel to return to their countries of asylum for validation. During the 1950s former “allied nationals” (i.e. Poles and Czechoslovaks) qualified for more favorable treatment under US occupation rules in Germany than former “enemy nationals” (Hungarians, Romanians, Bulgarians). The wonder is that American management was able to steer the organization through crises and keep it focused on its basic mission—producing and transmitting continually more relevant and comprehensive broadcasts to Eastern Europe.

It took time for the impact of broadcasts to become evident. Much of the early evidence was impressionistic, and much of it came as a result of the attempts of the Communist-dominated regimes to counteract the effect of the broadcasts. In fact, for several years the reactions of the Communist regimes provided stronger evidence of the effectiveness of broadcasting than information from any other source. The most direct evidence of impact was jamming. Soon after the broadcasts began, transmitters broadcasting noise interfered with them. In a fairly short time it

⁶ The Select Committee on Communist Aggression of the House of Representatives chaired by Congressman Charles J. Kersten of Wisconsin.

became evident that jamming was a Soviet-coordinated undertaking, with major jamming transmitters targeted at shortwave broadcasts in locations as distant as the Urals.⁷

Other kinds of response varied widely. Czechoslovak and Polish media carried strong denunciations of the radios and the “traitors” staffing them, often singling out individuals for sharp denunciation. Some broadcasting personnel were condemned to death. Initially the Hungarian regime was more reticent than the others. More selective but equally negative denunciations came from Soviet media. As time passed, indirect responses from all the target countries often provided strong evidence of the effectiveness of specific broadcasts: arguments were leveled against the content of programs without directly mentioning them; alleged earlier misdeeds by broadcast personalities were revealed.

As RFE’s network of information-gathering bureaus expanded to include most of Western Europe (as well as Athens and Istanbul), reports of listening from escapees and travelers became more frequent. In the summer of 1953 a modest audience-analysis section was set up in Munich. It rapidly expanded its activity to include systematic analysis of both regime media responses and reports from escapees, travelers, journalists and businessmen. Eventually, journalists reporting from Eastern Europe, mostly West Europeans, provided a great deal of information on the impact of broadcasts and regime reactions. They also became important sources of information useful in compiling broadcasts. RFE’s research operation developed files that by the end of the 1950s already contained more and more accurate information on life and people in the target countries than the Communist regimes themselves possessed. These files were kept open for the use of visiting journalists and academics. The arrangement was mutually beneficial. By the mid-1950s RFE became known as an essential center of information on Eastern Europe to all concerned with studying or reporting on the region.⁸

⁷ See Chapter 4 for a discussion of jamming.

⁸ When RFE was initially conceived, the CIA offered to provide background information on which broadcasts could be based. The promise never materialized, for reliable intelligence was too sparse and classification problems too complicated. By 1953 it became apparent that RFE was gathering so much information and its analysts were so expert at interpreting it that the CIA Intelligence Directorate assigned officers to Munich to draw upon it directly. Thus without resort to clandestine methods, RFE became a major contributor to the US Government’s intelligence on Eastern Europe and, eventually, on the entire communist world.

The most knowledgeable academic specialists on Eastern Europe and the Communist world came frequently to RFE both to consult with broadcasters and analysts and exploit files. Their visits, in turn, served to stimulate the radios' specialists and contribute to their broadcasts with lectures and consultations. The section established in 1953 within the RFE Political Advisor's Office to concentrate on the Soviet Union and on developments in other Communist countries and parties, also quickly gained the appreciation of specialists from the United States and Western Europe, and enjoyed a relationship of mutual respect and support with most of them.

During the early 1950s, Moscow consolidated control over Eastern Europe by purging satellite Communist parties and condemning some of its most faithful erstwhile collaborators. In late 1952, RFE's Czechoslovak broadcasters responded to the trials of Rudolf Slánský and others accused of crimes against communism by mounting a simulated trial of the Czechoslovak leadership, which attracted a wide listenership in Czechoslovakia. Other services engaged in imaginative programming to capitalize on internal dissension in Communist hierarchies in other target countries. When difficulties in the Hungarian Party welled up in the summer of 1953, RFE welcomed the replacement of Rákosi by Imre Nagy. The Polish Communist Party was rocked by the revelations of the defector Józef Światło, which were skillfully exploited by RFE.⁹ There are many other examples of successful RFE broadcasting in the 1950s, including its exploitation of the death of Stalin and subsequent strains in the Kremlin in 1953, and broadcasts about the Khrushchev secret speech in 1956. These successes gave RFE's broadcasters confidence in their mis-

⁹ RFE's exploitation of Światło remains the most dramatic example of effective broadcasting and lasting impact on a satellite communist system, for it led directly to the events in Poland that resulted in the "Polish October" and the return to power of Władysław Gomułka in 1956. CIA officers deserve credit for realizing the propaganda value of Światło and making him available to RFE for broadcasts, even though this initially aroused substantial controversy within RFE. RFE's New York component, dominated by Poles under the influence of exiled politicians, opposed the use of Światło. The Poles in Munich, whose thinking had evolved to the point where they were giving priority to the likely response within Poland itself, recognized Światło's potential impact, especially on the Polish Party hierarchy, and produced a series of programs, aired over and over again in late 1954 and early 1955, and eventually sent into Poland by balloon as leaflets, which publicized the information Światło was able to divulge. It had a devastating effect on the Polish communist hierarchy.

sion and techniques. They provided cumulative evidence of the station's effectiveness.

When RFE was established, it was initially assumed that it would broadcast to Yugoslavia and Albania. By the time the operation in Munich was being established, Tito had already broken with Moscow. As RFE evolved, plans for broadcasting to Yugoslavia were abandoned. A minor broadcasting effort to Albania which was started in 1950 from the US was also abandoned. Yugoslavia remained of major interest to RFE, however, and a great deal of effort was put into broadcasting about it in the early 1950s. Yugoslavia demonstrated that a Communist-dominated country could go its own way, could moderate the extreme features of Soviet-style communism and create a wider arena for independent initiative among its people. Yugoslavia was never held up to East European audiences as an ideal, only as an experiment in revisionist communism that they would be interested in knowing about for the relevance it might have to their own situation. Officials in Yugoslavia were well aware of RFE's broadcasts. Some came to Munich and suggested closer contact, and I went to Belgrade in 1955 to explore setting up an information bureau there. The possibility receded into the background when Khrushchev achieved a degree of reconciliation with Tito in 1956.

As evidence of RFE's impact accumulated, the Communist rulers of Eastern Europe were confronted with the continually more difficult job of countering it. In their tightly controlled media, invective was initially a major form of response, but it was no doubt often counterproductive, for it gave broadcasts publicity they might otherwise have lacked. Series of articles in newspapers, pamphlets, and even whole books were published denouncing the "subversive" and "wrecking" activities of RFE broadcasters. The fact that the Communist regimes attributed them to CIA did not necessarily detract from their impact.¹⁰

RFE became a major target of the Communist intelligence services. In recent years, evidence of penetration by regime agents has accumulated. But few seem to have done major damage, and none affected broadcast content in any serious way. Among the themes used by Communist efforts to counter RFE's effect was a campaign to characterize the radio's

¹⁰ Comprehensive study of regime responses, including the debates which must have occurred in target countries, and in Moscow, about how to counteract the impact of RFE broadcasts, should now be possible using documentation that has become available as a result of the collapse of communism.

operations as inimical to German interests and a danger to German internal security. This had several aspects and at times capitalized on the opposition of RFE critics in Germany who became, in effect, unintentional accessories to Communist purposes.¹¹

Compared to the manifestations of terrorism which became common in the late 20th century and now bedevil the whole world, the physical attacks on RFE premises and the efforts to intimidate RFE employees that occurred in the 1950s seem even more amateurish now than they did at the time. RFE operated during this period with very few security precautions. Employees were required only to show German guards a simple ID to enter the Englischer Garten headquarters building. Visitors were frequent and often moved about the building unescorted. Housing for employees in various parts of Munich had no protection other than that provided by local German police. In retrospect, and in light of the way the world has evolved since, all this seems quite astonishing.

The “redefection” campaign mounted by Moscow in the early 1950s, and imitated by each East European Communist regime, provided further evidence of the radios’ impact. In retrospect, it can be seen to have been more an annoyance than a serious challenge for RFE. For a year or two following the activation of Radio Liberty in 1953, the campaign had a deleterious effect on Soviet émigrés associated with the Radios. Exiles who purportedly became disgusted with life in the West, in some cases specifically with employment in RFE (and RL), and decided to return to their countries were publicized in regime media, often after being featured at press conferences and other staged events in East European capitals. In a few instances these actually included disgruntled low-level former employees or defectors who had for some reason been negligently handled by American or German authorities or RFE officials. In other cases, these “redefectors” were regime intelligence agents called back

¹¹ At the end of 1952 RFE hired a full-time advisor on German affairs, Ernst Langendorf, an American citizen of German descent, who developed close relations with both Bavarian and Federal German government agencies as well as German media, academic and research organizations, and lobbying groups with an interest in Eastern Europe. His activities contributed quietly but effectively to German understanding of RFE. Eventually he edited and distributed a German-language version of the Free Europe Committee’s monthly magazine, *News from Behind the Iron Curtain*, called *Hinter dem Eisernen Vorhang*, which was based largely on material produced by RFE researchers. It came to be widely used by media and research institutions in Germany and still constitutes a valuable historical record of Eastern Europe during the communist era.

to their countries and dramatized as disillusioned émigrés. On balance, the redefection campaign gave RFE more positive publicity than it did damage.

RFE's sister organization in the Free Europe Committee, the Free Europe Press (FEP), was staffed by an unusually creative and energetic group of Americans and East Europeans. Capitalizing on research and experimentation that had been done under US Government auspices, these men developed a program for sending printed material into Eastern Europe by balloon. Meteorology favored them, for, as one of the slogans of the era declared, "The Winds of Freedom blow always from the West." With what in retrospect can be seen as remarkable speed and efficiency, FEP set up balloon-launching stations in the German border area in the early 1950s and began sending helium-filled balloons loaded with leaflets printed on light, moisture-resistant paper into the air, first over Czechoslovakia, next to Hungary, and finally to Poland.¹²

In close collaboration with the RFE broadcasting desks, a series of regular bulletins was produced with information designed to entice readers. Early in the period of balloon operations, a confiscatory currency "reform" in Czechoslovakia provided an opportunity to send out small leaflets resembling the new currency and condemning the "reform." This was the only example of mildly provocative material being dispatched by balloon. From mid-1953 onward, a continuing series of leaflets centered around the theme of rational, practical resistance to communism and stressing the value of passive resistance to Communist measures—"Operation Veto" for Czechoslovakia and "Operation Focus" for Hungary—were sent to these two countries.

Polish broadcasters were at first skeptical of balloon operations, for they feared their potential provocative impact. Leaflets produced for Poland were carefully coordinated with Jan Nowak, head of Polish broadcasting, and concentrated on the revelations of Józef Światło. American embassies in the target countries were initially not enthusiastic about balloon operations, but the operations were explained to and coordinated with the State Department in advance, and copies of leaflets were sent to embassies to keep them informed of what was coming into

¹² West Germany remained under three-power Allied occupation until 1955, so all that was necessary to establish these launching stations was to coordinate with US occupation authorities and local German government bodies. Balloon operations provoked no serious opposition in Germany. In the impoverished border regions they represented a welcome source of employment.

their countries with, *inter alia*, the request that they report evidence of the leaflets and their impact. By the mid-1950s, when balloon operations were at their peak, US embassies had for the most part become accustomed to tolerating both radio broadcasts and balloons, though some ambassadors remained skeptical about their impact and overall desirability. East European governments faced a new set of frustrations in trying to deal with the balloons. Populations were mobilized to gather and destroy leaflets, and strong measures were announced to punish persons passing them on. People caught doing so were tried as examples. Communist regimes claimed that balloons represented a grave danger to aircraft and made protests to international air authorities. There were allegations of incidents of near collision between airplanes and balloons, but no such incidents were confirmed.

After the dramatic events of 1956—the “Polish October” and the Hungarian Revolution—balloon operations were quietly brought to an end. They had run their course. Over the next few years the Free Europe Press shifted its operations to efforts to infiltrate more carefully tailored and targeted materials into Eastern Europe—books, magazines, etc.—by mail and through other forms of distribution, utilizing postal systems, trade channels and travelers.

The great watershed for RFE came in 1956, when the Communist regime in Warsaw was shaken to its roots by dissension that Moscow was unable to contain, and Władysław Gomułka was allowed to return to power. The Polish October represented an extraordinary challenge for RFE. Broadcasts aimed to provide the Polish population, as well as officials of the Party and the government, with as much relevant information as possible. At the same time, RFE’s Polish broadcasters were careful to avoid anything that might have an incendiary effect. The Poles’ recollection of their recent history, especially the Warsaw Uprising of 1944, made this task easier, for the memory of this experience was still alive among RFE’s Polish broadcasting staff. The Polish broadcasting team under the leadership of Jan Nowak, performed with exemplary skill and effectiveness.¹³ The result was a triumph for RFE and, in a sense, the first step in a process which eventually culminated in Poland’s escape from Soviet domination in 1989.

¹³ Jan Nowak had been a major participant in the Warsaw Uprising. He did not need to be reminded by RFE’s American management of the need to avoid exacerbating a potentially inflammatory situation.

Hungary confronted RFE with an even more difficult challenge. The Hungarian population during the summer of 1956 became excited by developments in Poland. Hungarians, unfortunately, lacked the self-control that history had imposed on the Poles. Soviet attempts to manipulate the situation provoked a full-scale revolution which unleashed Hungarian emotions to an extent that could not be contained. RFE's Hungarian broadcasting staff was not as tightly disciplined as the Polish broadcasting unit. After a brief period of euphoria when the revolution against Communist totalitarianism seemed to have succeeded, the Soviet military and the KGB marched in to Budapest to reestablish control. The role of RFE Hungarian broadcasts in this situation will probably continue to generate controversy for decades. A conference in Budapest devoted to the subject on the 40th anniversary of the uprising in October 1996 produced a full measure of emotion, but also a modest degree of balance and understanding. There was little evidence of deliberate incendiary effect by RFE broadcasts. The controversy over RFE's impact is itself evidence of the radio's effectiveness.

The fact remains that by the end of the decade of the 1950s RFE had evolved into a semi-permanent feature of the East European political and social landscape. It was a fact of life in Eastern Europe. It had not yet achieved major impact in Romania and Bulgaria, but broadcasts to these countries had laid the groundwork for the stations to expand to full-service saturation level in subsequent years.

RFE helped keep the idea of freedom and national independence alive throughout Eastern Europe for the next three decades, remaining true to the broadcast principles that had evolved so successfully in the 1950s. Following the election of the Polish Pope in 1978 and the steadily advancing sclerosis that afflicted the Soviet Union, populations across Eastern Europe reached a point where they were ready to follow leaders with a sense of national purpose and regain genuine independence in the late 1980s. The best demonstration of RFE's effectiveness from the 1950s onward are the tributes it has received from these leaders in the wake of the true revolutions in Eastern Europe since 1989.

CHAPTER 2

Goals of Radio Liberty

GENE SOSIN

Aleksandr Herzen wrote from London in the 1850s: “There is no place for freedom of speech at home—it can be heard elsewhere. I remain in the West only to begin free Russian speech, to set up for Russia an organ without censorship, to be your organ: your free, uncensored speech is my goal.” He fulfilled that goal by publishing *Kolokol* (*The Bell*), the first Russian émigré paper. It wielded great influence among the intelligentsia inside tsarist Russia and was a powerful irritant to the authorities.

Herzen expressed one of the basic goals of the shortwave station that was born a century later in 1953 as “Radio Liberation,” and became “Radio Liberty” in 1959. Our electronic *Kolokol* declared its intentions in the inaugural broadcast of the Russian service on March 1—the same day that Stalin suffered his fatal stroke. Incidentally, several weeks before we went on the air, we had prepared a dramatic opening to each day’s broadcasts. First the listeners would hear the tick-tock of a clock, then a sepulchral voice would intone in Russian “Today Iosif Vissarionovich Stalin is 73 years old, two months, so-and-so many days.” Pause. More tick-tock. Then: “The time of Stalin is coming to the end.” (“*Vremya Stalina podkhodit k kontsu.*”) Alas, the idea was scrapped when objections were raised that, being a Georgian, he might live to a hundred and we would be ridiculed.¹

The program began by announcing: “This is Radio Liberation speaking, the free voice of your compatriots abroad.” It declared several of RL’s goals at the outset: the principle of sovereignty of the people that was first proclaimed by the February Revolution of 1917; the right of all

¹ For additional information see Gene Sosin, *Sparks of Liberty; an Insider’s Memoir of Radio Liberty* (College Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999); Russian edition, 2008, [ftp://realaudio.rferl.org/ru/sosin.pdf](http://realaudio.rferl.org/ru/sosin.pdf).

the nationalities situated on the present territory of the Soviet Union freely to choose their fate on the basis of democratic self-expression; freedom of conscience and religion; elimination of the system of terror and forced labor; the breakup of the kolkhozes and the right of the peasants to choose their own form of agriculture; the end of Party and government control of the arts and sciences. Also announced as a goal was the liquidation of the Soviet Union's aggressive foreign policy by means of the overthrow of the regime and the end of Bolshevism. The declaration added: "It stands to reason that we cannot give you ready-made recipes and instruct you how to overthrow the hateful tyranny. When the decisive hour arrives, you yourselves will sense better than we can how you must act." The first broadcast then concluded by declaring that "our task is to tell you about what you will never hear in the Soviet Union, to provide you with truthful information, and to help liberate you from the web with which Soviet propaganda is enveloping your souls."

It was not long before RL started broadcasting in many other languages of the USSR, appealing to the historical memory and national aspirations of the minorities, and promising to provide Soviet citizens an uncensored medium with a broad spectrum of ideas and information denied to them by the Kremlin—the truth about life abroad, the truth about the past, and the truth about what was really going on inside their own country. We gave them *glasnost* more than thirty years before Gorbachev and Yakovlev.

Radio Liberation has been criticized for its early broadcasts. Its message has been called too militant and aggressive, its tone too shrill and hostile, its alleged aims too apocalyptic and revolutionary. It is true that in the first year the American government financed a group of political émigrés who called themselves "The Coordinating Center of the Anti-Bolshevist Struggle." They were authorized to voice their implacable opposition to the dictatorship over a station called Liberation, which would implement the policy of the new Eisenhower administration. So it is no wonder that many of the writers and announcers took advantage of the opportunity to get even with the regime that had brought such grief to them, their families and their beloved homeland. It took time for our policy and programming controls to restrain the more intransigent and vengeful émigrés on the staff, especially the broadcasts of the Central Asian and trans-Caucasian minorities, whose esoteric languages were not yet adequately monitored by the Americans in charge. Some of the Russian broadcasters would express their contempt in heavily sarcastic tones. I

was then in our New York bureau, and was told that one prominent woman announcer in Munich, when reporting the news, would pronounce the name of the Soviet leader, Nikita Khrushchev, with a sneer. However, we benefited from calmer voices, including the former director of the BBC's Russian service, Victor Semyonovich Frank—the son of the famous philosopher expelled in 1922; Wladimir Weidle, the exiled art historian and literary critic, who was RL's first Russian program director; Vladimir Yurasov, a Soviet lieutenant colonel who defected from occupied Berlin; the voices of Menshevik émigrés who exposed the Soviet brand of socialism; and the incomparable Father Aleksandr Schmemmann, whose weekly 15-minute "Sunday Talks" on religious and cultural themes, delivered in his quiet, reassuring baritone, attracted and spiritually nourished millions of regular listeners, including Solzhenitsyn, during the three decades when he became Russia's favorite radio priest.

From the early years, RL's programming policy and content was shaped by American executives like Boris Shub, who took into consideration the sensitivity of our Soviet audience—their patriotism and their pride in the victory over the Nazi invader, their loyalty to many of the professed ideals of Lenin and his comrades, plus their presumed skepticism toward messages from émigrés in the capitalist West. We were aware of the pitfalls of hostile and blatant propaganda that would literally turn off our listeners. We spoke frankly and empathetically about their daily problems, and articulated their hopes for a better future. RL's writers and speakers strove to identify themselves with their audience and to establish rapport by bridging the distance between them with words like "our country," "our homeland," "we, your fellow countrymen." This, of course, distinguished us from the VOA, BBC, and other Western broadcasters to the Soviet Union.

Howland Sargeant, the president of RL from 1954 to 1975, was determined from the outset that RL should be an independent, credible, professional news medium, restraining both émigré invective and micromanaging from the CIA, which was the channel for funds and policy guidance to the radio until 1971. He frequently enlisted the advice of American and Western European academic experts on the Soviet Union concerning our programming policy and content. For openers, he took a small group of us up to Cambridge in 1955 to spend two days discussing our goals and methods with Harvard and MIT specialists including Merle Fainsod, Alex Inkeles, Ray Bauer, Richard Pipes, Max Millikan, Walt Rostow, and Marshall Shulman. They approved our rejecting the goal of

violent overthrow in favor of talking in terms of pressures that would ultimately bring about a moderation of the regime. It was proposed that rather than Radio *Osvobozhdenie*, we should be called Radio *Svoboda*—"Liberty" instead of "Liberation"—a loaded word that could imply intervention from abroad.

Throughout the Cold War, we periodically held conferences with many American Sovietologists and British scholars like Max Hayward, Peter Reddaway, and Leonard Schapiro, as well as USIA and State Department experts on the Soviet Union, and journalists in the United States and Western Europe, sometimes after they had reviewed audio tapes of our broadcasts in Russian and other Soviet languages. Among the most productive conferences were the RL-NYU meeting in 1965, and the London symposium on the uncensored writings of samizdat in 1970. Many of the experts later proved to be staunch supporters of RL and RFE in the early 1970s when Senator Fulbright and others attacked the stations as "outworn relics of the Cold War."

Wilbur Schramm, Stanford's famous expert on communication research, studied our operation in Munich in 1957 and advised that in order to capture the attention of the listener we had to make sure that the "promise of reward" was greater than the "threat of difficulty." In other words, faced with continuous jamming, we had to offer enough incentive by selecting content that made it worth choosing RL in preference to competing Western stations that at times were not blocked. We tried to overcome the disadvantage by providing forbidden fruit and stimulating ideas. A series of programs revived taboo writings of pre-revolutionary and early Soviet writers. Historical events and anniversaries meaningful for Russians and other Soviet nationalities that the Kremlin ignored or distorted were commemorated in several special broadcasts. When the Second Soviet Writers Congress opened in Moscow in December 1954, we saturated the airwaves with messages to the delegates from leading émigré, American and Western European writers. This provoked the first attack from the regime. In 1955, RL honored the bicentennial of Moscow State University, founded by Lomonosov, who wrote "The sciences do not tolerate coercion." Several American university presidents and professors joined with émigrés who were Moscow graduates to express the hope that unfettered learning would someday prevail.

In 1956, we observed the 75th anniversary of Dostoyevsky's death by broadcasting more than forty messages from world-renowned writers and artists, including two future Nobel Prize winners, Albert Camus and

Isaac Bashevis Singer. All of them acknowledged the impact of his works on their own creative development. The depth of their individual insights and the variety of their responses contrasted with the one-sided official Soviet line.

Eleanor Roosevelt, Norman Thomas, US labor leaders, and leading members of Congress from both parties accepted RL's invitation to reach our audience with assurances that world public opinion cared about their fate. We hoped to raise the prestige of RL and refute the negative image projected by Soviet media of RL as a haven for spies and renegades. When we invited Americans to our microphone, they focused on internal subjects close to the interests of the Soviet people, while the Voice of America broadcasts to the USSR concentrated primarily on American life and values. Howland Sargeant liked to quote Henry Loomis, director of the VOA, who compared our two stations to the blades of a scissors, each working together to produce an effective cutting edge.

In contrast to the VOA, broadcasts by RL that dealt with America would at times include criticism of negative aspects of our society in order to enhance the credibility of the radio as an independent medium. For example, in his interviews Norman Thomas not only excoriated the Soviet regime's failure to fulfill the promises of socialism, but he also pointed to the continuing inequalities in American society despite the progress made since the New Deal. Rarely was there any interference from our sponsors in Washington. However, one exception was a message RL solicited from Linus Pauling, the Nobel laureate in physics, who deplored the US decision to resume nuclear tests in 1962 and called for both nations to work for universal and total disarmament. Pauling had spoken over RL six months earlier in condemnation of Khrushchev's unilateral resumption of testing. To broadcast his criticism of the American decision would demonstrate the radio's objectivity. However, the CIA insisted that Pauling's statement not be used without balancing it with opinions of scientists who explained the US position. In the end, an effective half-hour program was broadcast that included pro and con reactions in the press; favorable comments from physicist Edward Teller and Nobelist chemist Willard Libby; and a statement from Nobelist geneticist Herman Muller, who expressed his disapproval along with Pauling. Dr. Leonard Reiffel, an expert on the peaceful uses of atomic energy, spoke of the problems involved in making the right decision in an era faced with the threat of nuclear war. Like the others, he emphasized the importance of freedom of discussion in an open society, in contrast to Soviet secrecy.

Khrushchev's secret speech of 1956, partially exposing Stalin's crimes, was beamed back into the USSR, and validated many of our frequently repeated themes. His revelations shocked many Communists abroad, and RL reported their disillusionment with the God that had failed. The unrest in Eastern Europe and the crushing of the Hungarian revolution later that year exploded the myth of the harmonious relations between the Soviet Union and its so-called fraternal allies. We were convinced that more and more of our listeners would seek answers from us to their doubts about the regime's decades-old myth of infallibility that Khrushchev himself had unmasked. We were careful to refrain from gloating and we focused on the need for further reforms. RL sought to establish the image of itself as a "guest in the Soviet home," a surrogate voice articulating the suppressed ideas of our friends, acting not as an agitator but as an adviser. And the name of the radio was changed from "Liberation" to "Liberty" in 1959, reflecting the shift of US policy toward moderation and promoting evolutionary changes.

In the late 1950s the publication in the West of *Doctor Zhivago* by Boris Pasternak ushered in a new phase of RL's programming content. It was the first important banned literary work by a famous contemporary Soviet writer which the radio made available to its audience. That forbidden fruit was not published in the Soviet Union until Gorbachev's era. Beginning with the 1960s, *samizdat* (self-published) literary works and political documents, written by such dissidents as Andrei Sinyavsky and Yuli Daniel, Andrei Sakharov and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, were brought out to the West and occupied an important part of RL's broadcast schedule for the remainder of the Cold War. The Final Act of the Helsinki Conference of 1975 led to the establishment of unofficial monitoring groups among dissidents in several Soviet cities who informed the world—and, via RL, their own people—about the Kremlin's violations of civil and human rights. Each issue of the reliable "Chronicle of Current Events" was promptly disseminated on the air, as were the petitions of repressed minorities such as Lithuanian Catholics, Crimean Tatars and Jewish refuseniks.

The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 had intensified dissent, especially among the Soviet intelligentsia and, in the decade of stagnation before Brezhnev's death in 1982, this led to the arrival in the West of many prominent writers, artists, lawyers, scholars, and scientists. It became the conscious policy of RL to draw on the expertise of this new post-Stalin émigré wave. Included among them were members of the dis-

sident intelligentsia such as Vasily Aksyonov, Ludmilla Alexeyeva, Andrei Amalrik, Arkady Belinkov, Sergei Dovlatov, Dina Kaminskaya and her husband Konstantin Simis, Lev Kopelev, Anatoli Kuznetsov, Vladimir Maximov, Ernst Neizvestny, Viktor Nekrasov, Mstislav Rostropovich and his wife Galina Vishnevskaya, Boris Shragin, Andrei Sinyavsky and his wife Mariya Rozanova, Georgi Vladimov, and Vladimir Voinovich. They contributed to RL, some as regular staff members and freelancers, others as frequent guests at our microphones. Their insights and critique of Soviet reality helped reinforce the station's role as a voice of uncensored Soviet public opinion championing civil and human rights and artistic freedom.

Many of these talented individuals were attracted to RL thanks to the efforts of Francis (Ronny) Ronalds, RL director in the mid-1970s. A unique contribution to programming was made by Aleksandr Galich, the famous dissident and satirical balladeer, who joined RL soon after he came to the West. His songs of protest—some poignant, some hilarious, performed with a guitar—were already popular among those at home who obtained his clandestinely recorded tapes. His broadcasts from Munich and later from Paris enabled him to reach a multitude of appreciative listeners throughout the Soviet Union.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, RL's programming staff was enhanced by the hiring of several recent Jewish émigrés from the USSR. This provoked conflict between them and some of the older, "right-wing" Russian nationalist émigrés, who alleged that the radio was losing its Russian spirit. In turn the newcomers accused them of anti-Semitism. To make matters worse, the lack of adequate managerial supervision of broadcast content at that time enabled those writers and editors who held bigoted views to inject their prejudices into programs on historical and religious themes, particularly in Russian and Ukrainian programs.

When Jewish staff members protested, the Board for International Broadcasting (BIB) assigned its planning and research officer, James Critchlow, to determine whether policy violations were occurring by his monitoring actual broadcasts and studying tapes and scripts. Critchlow, who had been an executive of RL during the first twenty years of its existence, was eminently qualified for this task. He documented a small but alarming incidence of anti-democratic, anti-Western and anti-Catholic references, as well as "material potentially offensive to non-Russian nationalities of the USSR." Critchlow found a program devoted to Konstantin Pobedonostsev—the principal adviser to Tsars Alexander III and

Nicholas II, and notorious in Russian history as an anti-Semite—that praised him as a “great conservative thinker.” The American press publicized the brouhaha at the radio, citing other controversial broadcasts, and a sharp exchange of views followed between the RFE/RL and BIB managements and magazines such as *Newsweek* and *The New Republic*.

Policy control of program content was tightened, and the BIB approved a new Professional Code for RFE and RL, which clearly stated that “scrupulous care shall be taken to avoid religious, ethnic, class-based, or cultural slurs upon any persons or groups in our broadcast audience... Anti-Semitic, anti-Catholic, and other anti-religious locutions shall be scrupulously avoided. RFE/RL professionals shall represent a public model of tolerance and of respect for pluralistic diversity and the human rights of all persons.”

Gorbachev’s relaxation of controls led to the end of jamming in 1988 and permitted RL to develop round table discussions by telephone with Soviet citizens and stringers for the radio in various cities of the USSR. RL rose to the top position in listenership among foreign shortwave stations, culminating in our finest hour during the attempted putsch of August 1991, when the entire nation—including Gorbachev in the Crimea—was kept informed by our correspondents in Moscow about the people’s resistance and Yeltsin’s courageous defiance of the obscurantists who sought to undo the reforms of *glasnost* and *perestroika*. As Elena Bonner, Sakharov’s widow, expressed it: “In those busy days in August, Radio Liberty, like its famous namesake in the Delacroix painting, was not only figuratively but literally on the barricades with us.”

The end of the Cold War and the demise of the Soviet Union confronted RL with new challenges. More than a half century after we began broadcasting, Radio Liberty’s message is still relevant in the increasingly authoritarian era of Vladimir Putin.

CHAPTER 3

The Voice of America: A Brief Cold War History

ALAN L. HEIL JR.

“What did these [Western international broadcasters] mean to us until the events of last December? [1989] The metaphor of the reeds comes to mind. It was as if we were living underwater and we needed reed pipes for air to breathe. The reeds were the radios of the West. Without them, the entire people surely would have suffocated.”

—Nicolae Manolescu, interview by VOA Romanian Service, 1990

“It may very well be that the forty-year activity of the Voice of America in Russian will be considered by future historians of the Soviet Union as a kind of informational Lend Lease of incalculable value.”

—Vasily Aksyonov, novelist

The Voice of America, the nation’s only government-funded global broadcaster, has been on the air more than six decades. It has served listeners during World War II, the Cold War, the immediate post-Cold War period of unprecedented geopolitical and technological change, and in the era of new challenges after September 11, 2001.

This paper summarizes highlights of VOA broadcasts in the Soviet and East European region during the longest of these periods, the Cold War—that is, from 1947 until the formal demise of the Soviet Union on December 31, 1991.¹ Throughout, VOA broadcasters were dedicated to the fundamental principle enunciated in VOA’s first broadcast on February 25, 1942: “The news may be good. The news may be bad. But we shall tell you the truth.”²

¹ For an account of VOA Cold War broadcasting in China, Vietnam, Cambodia and other countries outside the Warsaw Pact area, see the author’s *Voice of America: A History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).

² “Voice of America: A Brief History” (Washington DC: Voice of America Office of External Affairs, 1997), 1.

VOA's role has been not only to reflect America to the world but to provide in-depth news and information about one region to others, which is called "cross reporting." It also has sought to offer in-country reportage of interest to the specific audiences it reaches, particularly in times of crisis. The preamble to the VOA Charter (Public Laws 94-350 and 103-415) says: "To be effective, the Voice of America must win the attention and respect of listeners." In order to achieve this, a "full service" VOA, then, must be a credible, comprehensive and honest source of information to listeners, viewers and Internet surfers who daily depend on it for facts about the US, the world, and their own homelands.

In the 1950s under the Eisenhower administration, executives of VOA, Radio Free Europe, and Radio Liberation (later Radio Liberty) met periodically to coordinate policy. When RFE and RL were founded, it was clearly understood they would concentrate on coverage of their listeners' homelands, while VOA's role was primarily to reflect America, along with news of the US and the world. Over the years, the missions converged. RFE and RL unhesitatingly reported major US foreign policy initiatives of interest to their target audiences. VOA, for its part, increasingly concentrated on events within target countries. This occurred for good reasons: VOA was less jammed than RFE/RL and seldom jammed at all in English. Ferment for change within the Soviet Union and former Warsaw Pact countries was a matter of interest not only within Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union but to VOA's worldwide audience. And, in the 1970s and 1980s, VOA's ability to cover events globally—both in the central news and language services—expanded greatly. Content analyses over the years always showed RFE and RL devoting more airtime than VOA to the domestic affairs of the target country, but the distinctions were less clear in the 1980s than in the 1960s. Nonetheless, each tended to reinforce the other's mission. As the Cold War ended, all three networks were respected as accurate, objective and credible sources of news and information.

Two examples of VOA's commitment to candid, complete informational broadcasting are in order. During the years treated here, VOA interviewed principal opposition leaders, artists, or intellectuals in exile. Among these were Vasily Aksyonov, Milovan Đilas, Václav Havel, Eugene Ionescu, Yuri Lyubimov, Mihajlo Mihajlov, Czesław Miłosz, Mstislav Rostropovich, Andrei Sakharov, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, and Lech Wałęsa, among many others. The station also reported details of events in the United States largely unavailable from other sources. These included

the civil rights revolution, the Vietnam antiwar protests, the Apollo lunar landing, the many faces of American technology and science, and the Watergate scandal—the latter as Soviet media ignored events leading up to President Nixon’s resignation in August 1974.

During the Cold War years, VOA services with most on-air hours to Communist Europe and the Balkans were Russian, Ukrainian, Polish and English. Others were Albanian, Armenian, Azerbaijani, Bulgarian, Byelorussian, Czech, Estonian, Georgian, Hungarian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Romanian, Serbo-Croatian, Slovak, Slovene, Tatar, Turkmen, and Uzbek.³

Some fifty-two million people in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe tuned in weekly to the Voice of America in the early 1980s.⁴ That was approximately half of VOA’s global audience at the time. Over the Cold War years, VOA had established a global network of transmission facilities. This delivered signals via shortwave, medium wave, some long wave, and, in Yugoslavia, occasional placement of recordings for rebroadcast by local radio outlets.

Jamming, of course, was a significant impediment to Western broadcasters seeking to reach these listeners. At peak periods of jamming, according to a BBC estimate, the Soviet government spent more than \$900 million annually to jam Western broadcasts. That easily exceeded the combined global budgets at the time of VOA, RFE/RL, and the BBC. RFE and RL broadcasts were jammed (with some exceptions) from their inception in the early 1950s until 1988. VOA was jammed intermittently in Russian and other indigenous languages, roughly in relation to the ebb and flow of East-West tensions and crises, within and outside the target countries.

The Soviet Union’s on-again, off-again jamming hit list included VOA in Russian and Soviet nationality languages, and from time to time, some Eastern European services such as Czech and Slovak. Other War-

³ Robert William Pirsein, “The Voice of America: A History of the International Broadcasting Activities of the United States Government, 1940–1962” (PhD dissertation, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, June 1970) 91, and Barbara L. Schiele, “VOA Broadcast Hours History” (VOA Office of Programs, 1973), 1–8.

⁴ Mark Pomar, Edward Mainland and Kurt Carlson, “The Voice Present and Future: VOA, the USSR and Communist Europe,” in *Western Broadcasting Over the Iron Curtain*, ed. K.R.M. Short (London and Sydney: Croom Helm Ltd, 1986) 113. See also the charts in Chapter 5 and Appendix C, based on RFE/RL audience research.

saw Pact countries jamming VOA included Poland and Bulgaria. Jamming of most VOA broadcasts ceased soon after President Kennedy's American University speech in 1963 until the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. It again stopped from the eve of the Helsinki conference of 1975 until the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and the rise of Solidarity in Poland five years later.⁵ Jamming finally ended permanently in 1987 as *glasnost* took hold. VOA was given permission to open a Moscow news bureau and encouraged to place material on stations throughout Russia and the republics, even before the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

VOA English broadcasts were never jammed. Among the most popular were the *Music USA* and *Jazz America* programs by VOA jazz impresario and on-air personality Willis Conover, who broadcast more than ten thousand programs from 1955 until his death in 1996. Conover was on the air during the administrations of eight US presidents. "Every emotion, love, joy, sadness," he once said, "can be communicated with the vitality and spirit that characterizes jazz and our country at its best. Which, of course, is the same freedom that people everywhere should enjoy."⁶

Conover's popularity was greatest in the Soviet Union and Poland and he influenced such jazz greats as Leo Feigin (Russia) and Adam Makowicz (Poland.) He co-produced a VOA Russian program called *Conover on Jazz*. As far away as Vladivostok, VOA monitor and jazz enthusiast Taraslav Balagush, wrote on learning of Willis's death that his program was "the first radio school of jazz for Russia [...] this is why I think that his place in jazz history should be right beside Satchmo, Duke, Count and the Bird."⁷ On the fifth anniversary of Willis's death, a Moscow jazz society and the US Embassy co-sponsored a commemorative concert that attracted hundreds, including some of the old Soviet commissars responsible for banning "the music of freedom" at the peak of the Cold War.

⁵ Jeanne S. Holden, "Interference: Soviet Jamming of International Radio Broadcasts" (Washington DC, United States Information Agency pamphlet, 1987) 14–15. See Chapter 4 for a discussion of jamming.

⁶ "Tribute to Willis Conover" (memorial concert at Voice of America, Washington, D.C., June 5, 1996) 1.

⁷ E-mail to Sherwood Demitz, chief, VOA Eurasia Division, May 31, 1996.

The Beginnings (1947–1949)

After World War II, the Office of War Information, VOA's parent agency, was disbanded within days of the Japanese surrender. VOA was transferred into the Department of State, its fate uncertain. During the war, the OWI had launched Bulgarian, Czech, Hungarian, Polish, Romanian, Slovak, and Serbo-Croatian services. As the war ended, the schedules of all of these were drastically reduced.⁸ Thanks largely to the skills of the first postwar Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs William Benton, VOA was able to survive calls for its abolition in Congress, the Executive Branch, and US media. Ironically, the Soviet media onslaught in Europe also saved VOA and spurred the rebirth of US overseas information and cultural programs.⁹

As Charles Thayer, veteran Soviet affairs specialist and VOA director in 1948-1949 put it: "The efforts of Radio Moscow, combined with the more brutal persuasions of the Soviet armies in Eastern Europe" offered convincing evidence of the need for sustaining and indeed expanding VOA broadcasts.¹⁰

Thayer's first assignment for VOA before becoming its director was to launch a Russian Service. The first broadcast, an hour a day, went on the air on February 17, 1947, just a week before VOA's fifth anniversary. Pioneer staff broadcasters were Victor Franzusoff and Helen Jakobson.¹¹ A dozen people worked around the clock to mount the first broadcast, dropping the needle on acetate disks to isolate program excerpts. Resources were so scarce, Thayer recalled, that the staff had to call upon Averill Harriman's daughter Kathleen to help out as a volunteer. (Harriman was an early champion of VOA broadcasts to the Soviet Union.)¹²

The early Russian Service was endowed with exceptional leadership. Thayer's successor, both as chief of the service and director of VOA, was Foy Kohler. He and Thayer launched a Ukrainian Service in 1949. In his book, *Diplomat*, Thayer reviewed VOA content and tone during the early

⁸ Pirsein, op.cit., 112, 133.

⁹ For an account of the revival of VOA and the US overseas information and cultural program authorized under the Smith-Mundt Act (Public Law 402), see Heil, *Voice of America: A History*, op.cit., 47.

¹⁰ Charles Thayer, *Diplomat* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), 189.

¹¹ Interview with Natalie Clarkson and Barbara Cummins, former chiefs, VOA Russian Branch, Washington, D.C., August 10, 2004.

¹² Thayer, *ibid*.

Cold War years. Some in the foreign affairs community, he recalled, advised the network to adopt a cool, dispassionate attitude in addressing Soviet and Warsaw Pact audiences. However, Thayer conceded, VOA, anxious to prove its worth to Congress and the public, “frequently fell to the temptation of broadcasting bitterly sarcastic, almost vitriolic anti-Stalinist attacks... The result was that the programs lost much of their credibility.” Thayer added that international broadcasting and the foreign information program “are essential to our defense. That it will develop into a powerful auxiliary arm of American diplomacy depends on whether its leaders and Congress understand its proper role, its limitations, and its need not for numbers (of staff) but for qualified personnel.”¹³

The Campaign of Truth and the McCarthy Hearings (1950–1953)

Ambassador Kohler served as VOA director from October 1949 until September 1952. He directed an expansion of VOA languages from twenty-five to forty-five, many of them broadcasting to the USSR and Eastern Europe. Among those added were Albanian, Armenian, Azerbaijani, Estonian, Georgian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Slovene, Tatar, and Turkmen. In October 1951, VOA inaugurated a program center in Munich. Many of the VOA non-English broadcasts to the region were produced there rather than in New York (VOA headquarters at the time) and beamed directly to their intended audiences.¹⁴

Kohler’s success in obtaining funding for this unprecedented post-war expansion coincided with President Truman’s Campaign of Truth, announced in April 1950 just two months before the outbreak of the Korean War. The impact of the Campaign for Truth on VOA programming may be inferred from its major points, summarized in a State Department booklet describing the Voice of America, 1950–1951. Major programming themes (June through December 1950) were listed as: United Nations actions against aggression (i.e., the Korean War), consolidation of the North Atlantic community, mobilization of the United States for the defense of peace, advance of American democracy, exposure of the

¹³ Thayer, *op.cit.*, 200.

¹⁴ Pirsein, *op.cit.*, 209, 216.

Soviet “peace campaign,” and exposure of the Soviet Union’s expansion designs.¹⁵

VOA veteran executive and news analyst John Albert described VOA practice in the early 1950s: “As the official statements of United States leaders took up polemics and attacks on the USSR, so did the VOA. Our hard-hitting negative approach corresponded to the feelings of the people of Eastern Europe who still had hope of liberation.” Ambassador George V. Allen, assistant secretary of state for public affairs and subsequently director of the United States Information Agency, later concluded: “Looking back, perhaps our tone wasn’t justified. A calm, persuasive tone is much better than the mere calling of names.”¹⁶

One of the ironies of VOA history is that as its reflection of harsher US rhetoric reached a Cold War peak, Senator Joseph McCarthy launched hearings seeking to document his allegations of Communist infiltration of government agencies, including the State Department and VOA. The Senator and his aides Roy M. Cohn and G. David Schine accused the State Department and VOA management of soft-pedaling news content and intentionally planning to build ineffective transmitting stations in the US to aid Moscow and its allies. This, as the VOA newsroom and language services were consumed with extensive reportage of the death of Josef Stalin. The McCarthy hearings focused on VOA from February 16 to March 10, 1953. Although none of the McCarthy-Cohn-Schine charges were ever proven, it took years for VOA to recover.

The Building of a Global Network (1954–1972)

The principal elements of VOA’s post-McCarthy rebound were the creation, under the Eisenhower administration, of VOA’s fourth parent agency since it went on the air in 1942, the independent United States Information Agency;¹⁷ the move of VOA headquarters from New York to Washington, as part of a USIA that incorporated most components of the US overseas information and cultural program; the advent in the mid-

¹⁵ Ibid., 203–204.

¹⁶ Heil, *Voice of America: A History*, op.cit., 49.

¹⁷ Previous parent agencies were: Office of the Coordinator of Information (COI,) February to June, 1942; Office of War Information (OWI,) June 1942 to September 1945; Department of State, September 1945 to July 1953.

and late 1950s of VOA and USIA leadership fully committed to accurate, objective and comprehensive news and programming in VOA broadcasts; the gradual enhancement of VOA's global network to strengthen its signal in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and to extend its reach to other regions, as low-cost transistor radios became widely available in Asia, Africa and Latin America; and the decision, driven by a reappraisal of VOA's overall mission, to enable it to better compete in a transistor world by leveling with its listeners and re-emphasizing its founding principle: fact-based broadcasting and insightful analysis.

Key figures in the VOA renaissance were USIA Director Allen, VOA Director Henry Loomis (1958–1965) and Program Manager Barry Zorthian, who served from the mid-1950s until accepting a senior foreign service assignment in 1961. VOA reported a number of crises during these years: the Poznań riots, Hungarian revolution and Suez war of 1956; the launching of Sputnik in 1957; the landing of US Marines in Lebanon in 1958, and the rise to power of Fidel Castro in 1959.

A thorough post-broadcast review of VOA content after the Soviet crackdown in Budapest cleared the VOA of charges that it had aired programming offering unwarranted promises of aid to freedom fighters in Hungary. But following the crisis, Zorthian recalled, policy officers again “descended on the Voice of America with a vengeance.” He and Loomis concluded that VOA needed some sort of statement of principles to shield its broadcasters from constant second-guessing by the State Department, and, at times, USIA.¹⁸

The result was a directive in 1960 from Allen, drafted largely within VOA, which later became known as the VOA Charter. Its main points:

- (1) VOA will serve as a consistently reliable and authoritative source of news. VOA news will be accurate, objective and comprehensive.
- (2) VOA will represent America, not any single segment of American society, and will therefore present a balanced and comprehensive projection of significant American thought and institutions.
- (3) As an official radio, VOA will present the policies of the United States clearly and effectively, and will also present responsible discussion and opinion on those policies.

¹⁸ Heil, *op.cit.*, 64.

The Charter was enacted into law and signed by President Ford in 1976 (minus the clause describing it as an official radio.) It was affirmed twice by Congress (that Public Law 94–350 in 1976 and Public Law 103–415 in 1994.) Loomis called it the single greatest accomplishment of his seven-year tenure as VOA director.¹⁹

Back in the late 1950s, Loomis had closed the Munich Program Center. He was reacting to a USIA research report which said the content of the Center’s broadcasts differed sharply in tone and content from VOA mainline programming. Loomis felt that “MPC (in its direct broadcasts) had been set up to do what Radio Free Europe was now doing.” He returned all programming origination to Washington, and converted the center into a VOA news bureau.²⁰

On the technical front, the Allen/Loomis era was a time of rebuilding after a post-McCarthy pause of about seven years. New shortwave or powerful medium wave (AM) stations were built in Germany, Okinawa, Liberia, Botswana, the Philippines, the Caribbean, and at Greenville, North Carolina. A land-based relay station on Rhodes replaced the transmitter ship *USS Courier* off that Greek island. This set the stage for later construction of a station near Kavala, in northern Greece, that broadcast a strong signal beginning in the early 1970s to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. To penetrate jamming, VOA Director of Engineering Ed Martin and his associates constructed a powerful megawatt long-wave transmitter near Munich that was capable of reaching deep into the USSR. This was used by VOA for many years.²¹

On the programming side, US policymakers outside VOA remained active in critiquing (and occasionally vetting) VOA content in the 1960s and first half of the 1970s. The Charter seemed, at critical times, to have little significance in protecting VOA journalism. After Allen and Zorthian left, Loomis faced three challenges on the policy front in the early 1960s: the Bay of Pigs fiasco in 1961, the Cuban missile crisis in 1962, and the escalating Vietnam War. Each crisis presented unique problems.

During the Bay of Pigs debacle, a brand new White House team failed to give USIA Director Edward R. Murrow advance warning of the

¹⁹ Ibid., 65, 355–356.

²⁰ Alan L. Heil Jr. and Barbara L. Schiele, “The Voice Past: VOA, the USSR and Communist Europe,” in *Western Broadcasting Over the Iron Curtain*, ed. Short, 102.

²¹ Ibid., 102, and Heil, *Voice of America: A History*, op.cit., 112–115.

exact timing of the U.S-backed invasion of Cuba in April 1961. USIA and VOA had difficulty getting a straight story during the CIA-backed operation, especially when the news almost immediately turned bad, from Washington's perspective. This prompted Murrow's famous statement: "They expect us to be in on the crash landings... we had better be in on the takeoffs."

Eighteen months later, Washington and Moscow came eyeball to eyeball in the most dangerous days of the Cold War, the nuclear showdown over the deployment of Soviet missiles in Cuba. This time, USIA was fully aware in advance of President Kennedy's nationwide address announcing the crisis. On October 24, 1962, VOA used saturation broadcasting to the Soviet Union, fifty-two transmitters with a total power of more than four million watts (about a third of VOA's worldwide capacity at the time) to penetrate jamming as the missile crisis evolved.²² USIA deputy directors Tom Sorensen (brother of the presidential adviser, Ted Sorensen) and Donald Wilson were active in insisting that all USIA media (including VOA) "not use any comment, regardless of source, which is not wholly consistent with the lines set forth in the President's speech" (Kennedy's address imposing a US naval quarantine on Cuba.) USIA stationed a senior officer, Burnett Anderson, in the VOA newsroom to clear all copy on Cuba before broadcast. There is no evidence, however, that he blocked any of the items. The commentaries aired by VOA, however, were predictably harsh, somewhat reminiscent of the Campaign of Truth.

By the mid-1960s, America was well on its way to deploying up to a half a million troops in Vietnam. Loomis recalled: "Increasingly, at first imperceptibly, there was more and more pressure from the White House on [USIA] and more and more pressure from the agency on the Voice to change a word here, to tone down another word there, to change the normal—in our judgment—the objective way of doing our job."²³ The pressures intensified in January and February 1965, when USIA Director Carl Rowan insisted on clearing news analyses written at VOA after a commentary critical of the Soviet Union was aired during a visit to North Vietnam by Soviet Premier Kosygin. A comment in the Paris newspaper *Le Monde* was deleted from a VOA review of the world press, and a por-

²² Short, *op.cit.*, 104.

²³ Harry Miles Muheim and Jerry Krell, "The Voice," (television documentary commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of VOA, Washington, DC: Worldnet Television, 1992).

tion of a *New York Times* editorial calling for a fresh presidential statement on Vietnam and appealing for fresh negotiations with Hanoi was edited out. Columnist Mary McGrory, then of the *Washington Evening Star*, summarized the dispute: “In 1960, under President Eisenhower and after much study, VOA finally received a Charter which gave it the green light to be candid and objective, in the manner of the British Broadcasting Corporation. But since the raids on Pleiku, say Voice officials, they have been chafing under the heaviest censorship in their history.”²⁴ The week that column appeared, Loomis—exhilarated by his successes but somewhat dispirited because of the disputes over content—resigned to take a senior post in the Department of Education in March 1965.²⁵

In the late 1960s, the news on the war continued to worsen, but VOA reported fully the anti-war protests and the slaying of civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. Two former VOA Russian Branch chiefs recalled that listeners repeatedly told them over the years that they were initially skeptical of America’s official Voice. But when they heard details on VOA Russian about negative aspects of the Vietnam War, Angela Davis, and Watergate, they became true believers and regular listeners.²⁶

VOA’s unprecedented coverage of the US lunar landing in 1969 drew a worldwide audience estimated at between 615 and 750 million during the eight-day mission. VOA Russian broadcast all the major events live. The Russian Service had a reporter aboard the carrier *USS Hornet* in the Pacific. A radio ham in Donetsk, Ukraine, reported near perfect reception to one of the broadcasts. Nearly all VOA broadcasts were heavily jammed in Moscow, but could be received in many rural areas, and were clearly audible in Georgia and the Soviet Far East. The USSR Division stayed on the air around the clock July 20 and 21 to bring Soviet listeners eyewitness accounts of an event their own media largely ignored. The last-minute delay in the first extra-vehicular activity on the surface of the moon proved to be a break for VOA services in Bulgarian, Hungarian, Slovene, Polish and Czechoslovak. In prime morning time for all of them, pairs of announcers narrated the events on the moon live as seen on American television. In Warsaw, thousands crowded the American Embassy’s lobby and grounds to hear the broadcasts and view a spe-

²⁴ Mary McGrory, “‘Voice’ Chiefs Chafe at Curbs,” *Washington Evening Star*, March 7, 1965, section A23.

²⁵ Heil, op.cit., 75.

²⁶ Ibid.

cial Apollo exhibit. VOA arranged two-way feeds to RFE, RIAS, and Radio Liberty from its studios in Washington.²⁷

The Winds of Change (1973–1980)

It was a decade in Cold War history marked by peaks and valleys: the resumption of US-Soviet summitry in 1972, the fall of Saigon and the signing of the Helsinki Final Act in 1975, and, as the decade ended, the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. The winds of change at VOA, meanwhile, were both internal and external.

With the Nixon-Brezhnev talks in the background and the initial Helsinki talks on the horizon, Soviet jamming of VOA broadcasts was lifted in September 1973. Détente was in the air. The debate between advocates of détente and those who wanted to play it straight was intense. At VOA, an early test was the December 1973 release in Paris of Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago*. Comprehensive coverage by VOA of *Gulag* and the global reaction to it never faltered. During the first ten weeks after the book's publication, VOA's Russian Branch broadcast 387 reports and features on *Gulag*, including comments by President Nixon and other world leaders, and analyses by reviewers in the United States and elsewhere.²⁸

The issue, especially for larger services such as Russian, Ukrainian and Polish, was whether or not VOA should broadcast substantial excerpts of the text of *Gulag Archipelago*. USIA Director James Keogh said it should not: "What we do not do, as the official radio voice of the United States, is indulge in polemics aimed at changing the internal structure of the Soviet Union. To read from the book would be outside the normal style of Voice of America programming and would tend to reinforce Soviet charges that the United States is utilizing these events as a political weapon and is intervening in the domestic affairs of the USSR. USIA has not muted its Voice. At the same time, we have not acceded to suggestions that we turn backward to the old Cold War style of broadcasting."²⁹

²⁷ Claude B. Groce, "VOA Coverage of the Flight of Apollo XI" (Voice of America, Office of Programs, August 1969), 1, 4–6, 9, 34.

²⁸ Short, *op.cit.*, 104–105.

²⁹ Letter from Keogh to Representative Robert L. F. Sikes, March 5, 1974.

The Keogh view prevailed, but was questioned by several members of Congress and some senior VOA officials. A draft guidance paper prepared at VOA said: “Broadcasting material about the book without extensive use of excerpts has the disadvantage of not adequately reflecting the flavor of the book. In effect, it tells the audience what others thought of the book without giving its substance so that listeners themselves could make up their minds and evaluate the facts against the stream of distortions delivered against Solzhenitsyn by the domestic [Soviet] media.”³⁰

The USIA, during the détente years, also sought to control the reporting of VOA overseas correspondents. This inevitably had an effect on some of its reportage of politics in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. VOA’s Munich bureau chief, Mark Hopkins, led a team of several correspondents in developing a series on what he termed “rampant corruption within Communist parties in the region.” But the USIA European area office criticized the plan in 1974 because, in its words, “if the series had been honest and accurate, it would have seemed gratuitous and ideologically polemical.”³¹

Two years later, the VOA Charter was enacted into law. This reduced the number of attempts by ambassadors or policy officers to dabble in pre-broadcast content. But it took several years after President Ford signed Public Law 94-350 for the requirements of the law to be practiced throughout the system. Twice in 1977, the American embassy in Belgrade attempted to prevent broadcasts of interviews by VOA correspondents with Yugoslav dissidents Mihajlo Mihajlov and Milovan Đilas. In both cases, the interviews were aired, thanks to the support of VOA senior managers, many of them USIA Foreign Service officers.³² However, the Mihajlov interview, at the request of US Ambassador to Yugoslavia, Lawrence Eagleburger, was broadcast only in English and other languages, and not Serbo-Croatian. Eagleburger maintained there had been an understanding between the US and Yugoslav governments that if Mihajlov was freed from prison—as he had been the day before the interview—there would be no publicity. Eagleburger acknowledged the

³⁰ Draft guidance paper, Voice of America, Office of Programs, February 26, 1974.

³¹ “Muted Voice of America,” *Time Magazine*, December 16, 1974, 80–81.

³² Heil, op.cit., 161–162.

existence of the newly enacted VOA Charter but told VOA correspondent Hopkins, “You have your job to do, and we have ours.”³³

As the decade ended and a new one dawned, two Cold War events posed even more sustained tests of VOA credibility. These were the Soviet invasion and occupation of Afghanistan in late December 1979, and the rise of Solidarity in Poland in the summer and fall of 1980. For most of this time (which also coincided with the Iran hostage crisis) VOA was fortunate to have Dr. Mary G. F. Bitterman as its director. This historian and public broadcasting professional was determined to defend VOA and its Charter, and that undoubtedly helped deter those tempted to interfere with broadcast content. She had the resolute backing of USIA Director John Reinhardt throughout the crises.

Dr. Bitterman faced pressures on many fronts. Jamming was resumed during her watch, as a Soviet reaction to events in both Afghanistan and Poland. VOA expanded its frequencies to counter the interference, and Bitterman sought funds for the startup of new language services (Dari in 1980 and Pashto in 1982). The Carter administration launched a worldwide campaign to expand a boycott of the 1980 Moscow Olympics as a protest against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. US officials objected to VOA’s proposal to send two correspondents to cover the games. Director Bitterman held firm. She placed her job on the line. VOA applied for visas to send two reporters to Moscow to cover the event, but it became a moot question; the Kremlin denied the visas.

On balance, the situation had improved. VOA had expanded its reportorial reach. Nine languages including Russian and Persian covered the Reagan inauguration, live, from the Capitol. There was an instantaneous bulletin at twenty-eight minutes past noon that January 20th by a VOA reporter in Tehran who watched the liftoff from Mehrabad Airport of the plane carrying the fifty-two American hostages to freedom. A journalist in the Tehran bureau of PARS, the official Iranian news agency, told a member of the VOA Persian Service on the phone minutes later that his office had followed events by monitoring a VOA Persian live broadcast from Washington.³⁴ A new era was at hand.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

The Reagan Years: Glasnost and the Fall of the Wall (1981–1989)

The decade the Cold War ended was full of surprises. It began with the miraculous rise of Solidarity in Poland and ended with the collapse in a whimper, not a bang, of the Soviet empire eleven years later. On the last day of 1991, I watched and listened with fascination in Studio 2 at VOA headquarters when the Russian Branch broadcast a live account from Red Square at midnight. The Soviet hammer and sickle flag was lowered, and the Russian flag raised. VOA's Alex Batchan described for millions the silence in the nearly deserted, snow-covered plaza, the end of an empire.

Michael Nelson, the former general manager of Reuters, posed a fundamental question: Why did the West win the Cold War? In his view: "Not by the use of arms. Weapons did not breach the Iron Curtain. The Western invasion was by radio, which was mightier than the sword." Nelson related that Mikhail Gorbachev told British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher that it was not the strategic defense initiative that was the decisive factor. As Nelson put it: "The first impulses for reform were in the Soviet Union itself, in a society that could no longer tolerate the lack of freedom... Whence came the knowledge of freedom? It came from the Radios," the BBC, RFE/RL and VOA.³⁵ Alexander Solzhenitsyn called it "the mighty non-military force which resides in the airwaves and whose kindling power in the midst of Communist darkness cannot even be grasped by the Western imagination."³⁶

At VOA, there were conflicts in the first year of the Reagan administration about what form that "kindling power" should take. The president's good friend, Charles Z. Wick, was named director of USIA, determined to leave a lasting imprint on the agency and all its activities, including VOA. One of Wick's new aides, Philip Nicolaides of Texas, wrote a memorandum asserting that "we [VOA] must portray the Soviet Union as the last great predatory empire on earth, remorselessly enslaving its own diverse ethnic populations, crushing the legitimate aspirations

³⁵ Michael Nelson, *War of the Black Heavens: The Battles of Western Broadcasting in the Cold War*, (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1997), xiii.

³⁶ Ken Adelman, "Casting a bright light with ideas," *Washington Times*, December 14, 1988.

of its captive nations, and ever seeking by all means, from subversion to military intervention, to widen the areas it subjugates.”³⁷

This seemed in sharp contrast to the accurate, objective and comprehensive news and programming envisioned in the Charter and VOA’s own pledge in its first broadcast to share with its listeners the good news and the bad, about America and the world. It sounded to some in the VOA staff like a summons to revive, even in newscasts, the polemics of the Campaign of Truth and the Cold War commentaries of the early 1950s. The Nicolaides thesis seemed to have Wick and VOA Director James Conkling firmly behind it when ten senior and mid-level VOA managers either resigned or were transferred to other positions in late 1981 and early 1982.

But the Nicolaides memo was leaked to the media from Conkling’s office and reported on the front page of the *Washington Post*. USIA backed off, at least in efforts to influence the VOA hourly newscasts and its US and overseas correspondents. Moreover, Wick was able to persuade Congress to endorse a \$1.3 billion relay station modernization plan for VOA. Nicolaides left USIA in the spring of 1981, and VOA gradually returned to form, its newsgathering capabilities intact and its language services freed to pursue more original reporting than ever before. A much more rigorous VOA internal program evaluation process was created. It was designed to stoke the fires of innovation in the broadcast services while ensuring that Charter standards and solid sourcing of all news would be sustained, whether produced centrally or in the language units.

A survey of VOA language service broadcasters in early 1982 helped forge a consensus on new programming approaches, consistent with these basic programming principles. VOA language services could become “reservoirs of creativity,” broadcasters felt, if management encouraged an atmosphere in which creativity could flourish. Regionalization, presence, and more service originations were essential to dynamic radio programming that spoke directly to listeners. (Until the early 1980s, much of the language service programming, except for some of the larger services such as Russian, Spanish and Arabic, had used translations of English scripts written in the central news and current affairs divisions. Now, they were encouraged to develop reportage on their own, sharing it with the rest of VOA.) Too much programming (it was said at the time of the sur-

³⁷ Philip Nicolaides, untitled memorandum to VOA Director James B. Conkling, September 21, 1981.

vey) had an automated sound, a sound of being rewritten or retranslated. Many more actualities (recorded or live voices) should be used to vary the programming.³⁸

The time was right for implementing the changes. In Poland, Solidarity leaders had been arrested, detained or harassed under martial law declared in December 1981, but the movement survived. Practically overnight, VOA's Polish Service expanded from an hour and a half to seven hours daily. In addition to full reports on Solidarity activities in Warsaw and other Polish cities, VOA Polish, according to Service Chief Ted Lipien, was able to offer a wealth of new programs about the United States. Among these was VOA's first dual language newscast (items in English followed by equivalent items in Polish for learners of English.) Other programs explored American history and literature and reviewed American media comments on Poland.³⁹

VOA's largest service in the mid-1980s, Russian, had two principal program streams in its seventeen hour daily schedule. One was current affairs offerings, which included the *Breakfast Show*, *Panorama*, *Events and Opinions*, *Night Owl* and regional news for the Soviet Far East. These blended Soviet area and American topics of the day. The other was features focusing on a single subject: *Youth Show*, *Religion in Our Life*, *Jewish Show*, *The World of Jazz*, *Science and Technology*, *Medicine*, *Books*, *Performing Arts*, *Pop Music*, *Pages of History*, *Labor Show*, *Agriculture*, *Cultural Life of New York*, among many others.⁴⁰

In 1983, thanks to an infusion of new funding under the Reagan administration, VOA began sending multilingual teams of broadcasters out to the American hinterland. The idea was to fulfill the goal of enlivening VOA's sound and reflecting what Director Kenneth Y. Tomlinson called "the voices of America" to the world. VOA built a red white and blue mobile studio christened Voyager to go on the road throughout the United States. The Russian Branch was among users during Voyager's twenty-two month run. Nik Sorokin, one of the service's most skilled reporters, recalled covering the 150th anniversary of the Oregon Trail, reporting that "The readiness to pull up stakes and travel in search of a different,

³⁸ Alan Heil, "Survey of Broadcast Services on Programming Development" (memorandum to VOA Director of Programs Frank Scott, March 23, 1982).

³⁹ Ted Lipien, "Polish Service Profile" (VOA 50th anniversary script No. 3-11507, February 24, 1992) 1-4.

⁴⁰ Pomar, Mainland and Carlson, "The Voice Present and Future," in Short, op.cit., 121.

hopefully better, life is a hallmark of the American character. I was able to inform my listeners in Russia about a significant period of American history and show the development of a basic American trait.”⁴¹

Another example of the renaissance in VOA programming was described by USSR Division Director Mark Pomar, who wrote that in the 1980s, the Russian Service produced more and more stories on prominent Russian émigrés living in the West, including Solzhenitsyn, Rostropovich, and Yuri Lyubimov, helping to “display the diversity of American thought and the rich contribution of people from around the world to the vitality of American artistic and intellectual life [and] sustain Russian culture, thereby gaining the respect of many Russians and inevitably increasing the size of its listenership.”⁴²

Pomar was able to break down what had been Solzhenitsyn’s intense dislike of VOA, manifest in a critical article Solzhenitsyn wrote for the May 1980 issue of *Foreign Affairs*. Just a decade after USIA Director Keogh had prohibited VOA from broadcasting excerpts from Solzhenitsyn’s *Gulag Archipelago*, Pomar was invited to the exiled author’s farm in Vermont and recorded an interview and Solzhenitsyn’s reading from his latest novel, Volume Two of *August 1914* (part of the historical series, *The Red Wheel*.) “Although ostensibly not about America,” Pomar wrote, “Solzhenitsyn’s contributions to VOA programming embody one of America’s most cherished values: the freedom to pursue truth and to create freely.”⁴³

Glasnost changed things, from the mid-1980s on. One April morning in 1986, the first reports of the nuclear accident at Chernobyl began to surface in Sweden, long before the Soviet media reported the meltdown. Experts estimated a potential toll of 40,000 cancer cases, and as many as 6,500 deaths after history’s worst nuclear industrial disaster. Former Soviet physician Dr. Irene Kelner had become a VOA Russian Service broadcaster and was on duty when the Chernobyl story broke. As it happened, she had received special training in Russia on the long-term effects of radiation. Dr. Kelner immediately began broadcasting relevant material to her listeners. “Radiation is a silent killer,” she told them. She cautioned those in the region not to eat fish, fresh vegetables and fruit,

⁴¹ Nikolai Sorokin, “Oregon Trail—Results,” e-mail message to VOA Special Events Chief Nancy Smart, October 11, 1993.

⁴² Short, *op.cit.*, 121–122.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, interview with Mark Pomar, August 30, 2004.

and not to drink milk. She also described the effect of radiation on the human body. Dr. Kelner's advisories were then translated into Ukrainian for those closest to the disaster site.⁴⁴

The following year, Secretary of State Shultz testified at the Senate Budget Committee and cited Chernobyl as an example of how US international broadcasters "play an essential role in promoting democratic values and undermining the monopoly of information which is a key element in the Soviet and East European governments' mechanisms for maintaining their authority." Western broadcasts spread the news of the disaster throughout the region, Secretary Shultz recalled, and this "compelled the Soviet government to address the concerns of its own people and its Warsaw Pact allies. The Soviet media became far more informative on Chernobyl... Indeed, the Polish government advised the country's citizens to listen to VOA for authoritative information on the accident."⁴⁵

With communications opening up and economic woes accumulating throughout the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies, the die was cast for the revolutions of 1989. Solidarity in Poland had laid the foundation nine years earlier. But other closed societies were being pried open by internal ferment and broadcasts from the West. Czechoslovakia was a prime example. BBC correspondent Misha Glenný, describing a rally called in Prague on August 21, 1988, the 20th anniversary of the Soviet invasion, quoted Jiřina Šiklova, a prominent member of the Czechoslovak dissident movement Charter 77, as saying: "None of us, opposition or officials, believed that 10,000 young people would demonstrate on that day. And when Naegele broadcast his piece that night on the Voice of America, people throughout the republic realized that something fundamental had changed." Glenný added: "For the past four years, the impact of VOA East European correspondent Jolyon Naegele on Czechoslovak politics has been greater than most journalists can dream of in a lifetime... Naegele has communicated the ironic nuances of Czechoslovak reality to people inside the country more effectively than anyone else before him. Naegele's success was due partly to one of the cardinal sins committed by [Gustáv] Husák and [Miloš] Jakeš. While publicly embracing *glasnost*, they insisted on feeding one of Europe's most educated populations with huge doses of indigestible verbal hogwash. It was this

⁴⁴ Judith Latham, "Profile: Russian Branch," *Voice Magazine*, June/July 1989.

⁴⁵ Secretary of State Shultz's testimony to Senate Budget Committee, January 22, 1987.

which ensured that the overwhelming majority of the population listened regularly to the VOA, the BBC, and Radio Free Europe.”⁴⁶

Naegele, a native speaker of Czech, covered the historic changes in Eastern Europe in 1989 for both the central newsroom of VOA and its Czechoslovak language service. Another bilingual correspondent filing to both broadcast units was Krzysztof (Kris) Janowski, who provided eyewitness reports of the dismantling of the Berlin Wall in early November. That set off a chain of events that led to the ouster of five communist regimes in less than two months. Blaine Harden of the *Washington Post* reported from Bucharest on December 28, 1989, just four days after the last of those old regimes fell:

“The people here were supposed to have been in the dark. Nicolae Ceaușescu and his 60,000-strong Securitate secret police dropped a cone of silence over twenty-three million people. Romanian appetites were not to be whetted by Eastern Europe’s singular year of democratic change. But shortwave foreign broadcasts, including those of the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe, as well as British, German and French stations, helped to undermine the Orwellian repression. Romania’s conspicuous silence for most of the past year was not the dismal quiet of hopelessness. Rather, it was the stillness of people paying attention. ‘This autumn we listened to the radio every day and every night. When the revolution happened in Czechoslovakia, I listened every hour,’ said Gabriel Marescu, 21, an engineering student at the University of Bucharest. ‘Everybody knew,’ Roxana Baban, a Bucharest physician, said. Everybody knew from the radio’.”⁴⁷

Nicolae Manolescu, chief editor of the country’s leading intellectual journal *Romania literara*, agreed:

“You no doubt remember how it was. The radios were openly listened to. There was no need for earphones to hide the sound. If you didn’t have your own radio you could always hear your neighbor’s. In the morning, getting up, I heard them upstairs, downstairs and next door

⁴⁶ Misha Glenny, “Spring Fever: The Momentous Events in Czechoslovakia,” *The Listener*, news magazine for the BBC audience, November 30, 1989.

⁴⁷ Blaine Harden, “Shortwave Radio Shaped the Revolution,” *Washington Post*, December 29, 1989, section A1.

and before going to bed at night, same thing—upstairs, downstairs—even if one’s neighbor was a simple citizen like me or a potentate of the regime or even a Securitate officer. We all had neighbors who performed this service for us, intentionally or not.”⁴⁸

The Endgame (1990–1991)

At the end of 1989, VOA was broadcasting 1,076 $\frac{3}{4}$ hours a week in forty-three languages to an estimated regular listening audience worldwide of about 127 million adults. More than a third of those listeners lived in the Soviet Union and Poland. By this time, *glasnost* had forced Warsaw Pact countries to dismantle many of the barriers erected earlier to prevent a free flow of information between and among their populations.

VOA had conducted its first radio bridges (electronic studio-to-studio panel discussions) or regular call-ins in Russian, Ukrainian, Polish and Lithuanian, as well as English and eight other languages. For the first time ever, reporters from the VOA Russian and Baltic Services filed on-scene reports from the Soviet Union, Latvia and Lithuania. The Voice opened a Moscow bureau and VOA correspondent Jolyon Naegele became the first Western journalist to interview Czechoslovakia’s Alexander Dubček since the Soviet invasion of 1968. Soviet Nobel laureate Andrei Sakharov granted VOA the only formal interview during his first visit to the United States.⁴⁹

New access to vastly more information electrified and energized citizens of the Soviet republics. Former VOA Lithuanian Service Chief Romas Sakadolskis sketched the lightning-like evolution of free debate in Lithuania in the late 1980s and early 1990s:

“Lithuanians formed a popular movement called Sajudis. Founded in June 1988 in the capital city of Vilnius, Sajudis spread rapidly throughout Lithuania. VOA kept track of the movement’s development and reported on its activities and principal personalities. VOA was there when Sajudis-backed candidates swept the elections to the republic’s legislature in February of 1990, and one month later when the new parliament

⁴⁸ Dorin Tudoran, interview with Manolescu, VOA Romanian Service, April 7, 1990.

⁴⁹ VOA Budget Memo, September 1989.

declared the restoration of an independent Lithuanian state. VOA was there in September of 1991 when the United States and the rest of the world recognized Lithuanian independence. On January 27, 1992, almost forty-one years after its first broadcast, VOA's Lithuanian Service was aired for the first time over local Lithuanian radio."⁵⁰

Izvestia said in late 1989 that Soviet citizens would be permitted a number of other "firsts." They could use Xerox machines freely, subscribe to foreign periodicals, and install satellite dishes to receive television programs produced in the United States and Britain.⁵¹ In less than two years after the fall of the Soviet Union, VOA Eurasia Division Chief Gerd von Doemming placed VOA on more than twenty FM stations in Russia and its former republics. Supported by VOA Director Chase Untermeyer, he also put a weekly Worldnet Television Ukrainian news magazine, *Window on America*, on Ukraine's national network. It had a peak viewing audience of eight million Ukrainians.

Former Russian Service Chief Natalie Clarkson recalls two incidents reflecting the dramatically changed media environment in the early 1990s. One was her marketing visit to a Radio Vedo transmitter tower in the hills overlooking Volgograd in the early 1990s. Clarkson found that the facility which had been employed during much of the Cold War as a jamming station to block Radio Liberty and VOA programs was now relaying VOA Russian to thousands of listeners in that huge city.⁵² The second was an unprecedented surprise call to Clarkson from Radio Russia in 1993. That network reached tens of millions of listeners throughout the Commonwealth of Independent States and was still available on the internal *tochka* speaker system in many apartments and homes. The Radio Russia producer at the other end of the line requested a two-minute report from Clarkson on the visit of a Russian defense minister to Washington. "It was a profound moment," Clarkson recalled, easily the most satisfy-

⁵⁰ Romas Sakadolskis, "Lithuanian Service Profile" (VOA 50th anniversary script No. 3-12561, July 28, 1992). VOA's Lithuanian Service and nine other Eastern and Central Europe services were closed on February 27, 2004. Six RFE/RL services to the region suffered the same fate in late 2003 and early 2004.

⁵¹ Radio Moscow Domestic Service in Russian, December 7, 1989, 1100 GMT.

⁵² Heil, *Voice of America: A History*, 126–127.

ing of her forty year career at the Voice. She then filed daily reports to Radio Russia until her retirement in 1996.⁵³

The climactic seventy-two hours of the Cold War “endgame” occurred during the aborted anti-Gorbachev coup of August 19–22, 1991. Gorbachev, under house arrest in the Crimea, acknowledged later that he had kept in touch with the coup plotters’ actions, and internal and external reaction to their attempted putsch, by listening to the BBC, Radio Liberty, and VOA. During the first hours after the coup was announced on state media, Boris Yeltsin’s new Russian government sent a series of faxes to Allen Weinstein, president of the Center for Democracy in Washington, DC. The faxes appealed for emergency help in resisting the coup. “The Russian government has NO ways to address the people,” one fax said about twelve hours after the coup was announced on the plotters’ fully-controlled Soviet media. “The following is BY’s [Boris Yeltsin’s] address to the Army. Submit it to USIA. Broadcast it over the country, maybe [on] the Voice of America. Do it! Urgent!”⁵⁴

VOA Russian Programs Chief Barbara Cummins recalls that the Yeltsin text was broadcast, as the Russian service expanded its airtime from fourteen hours a day to virtually around the clock. VOA established an extraordinary 24/7 network to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe that had updated hourly newscasts in Russian, even in the few hours that English-language programming was on the air. VOA central news correspondents Mark Hopkins and Kris Janowski worked around the clock to cover the sights and sounds of events such as the coup announcement. Janowski provided an eyewitness account when Russian President Yeltsin stood atop a tank outside parliament to denounce the coup.⁵⁵ There was live coverage of President Bush’s August 20 news conference on the crisis, simultaneously interpreted in Russian, and live reportage by VOA Russian Branch reporter Alex Batchan from inside the Russian Parliament building occupied by coup opponents. Programs Chief Cummins remembers that her team of specialists was tireless in obtaining interviews in Russia, Europe and the United States on the events in Moscow. Key figures were Branch Chief Natalie Clarkson, Lucy Flam, Vladimir

⁵³ Interview with Clarkson, August 10, 2004.

⁵⁴ “Make It Known,” *Washington Post*, August 20, 1991, section A15.

⁵⁵ VOA News Director Diane Doherty, in a memorandum to VOA Program Director Sid Davis nominating Hopkins and Janowski for a special award, October 18, 1991.

Matlin, Nik Sorokin and George Zorin. Cummins said it all added up to “the most inspiring programming experience” in her thirty years at the Voice.⁵⁶

Conclusion

Only a few days after the aborted coup, VOA field recording engineer Reuel Zinn was in a Moscow taxi and happened to mention to his driver that he worked for the Voice of America. The driver took him at once to the vast plaza in front of the Parliament building. There, on a wall near the building, known as the Russian White House, were hand-printed letters in Cyrillic that read: “Thank you, Voice of America, for the truthful information.”⁵⁷

About a decade later, Barbara Cummins recorded a roundtable discussion with Ludmilla Alexeyeva. The occasion was VOA’s 60th anniversary. In Alexeyeva’s view, it is difficult to overstate what radio broadcasts from the other side of the Iron Curtain meant to the people of the Soviet Union: “Western broadcasts opened an alternative channel for the flow of information and ideas, putting an end to the monopoly of official Soviet Party propaganda. Tyranny abhors new ideas and truth. These broadcasts marked the beginning of the end for the Soviet Party and Soviet ideology.”

Alexeyeva added that VOA broadcasts about Watergate and the events leading to President Nixon’s resignation astonished her. They convinced her of what she termed “the profound difference” between the totalitarian Soviet system and the American way of life. If the Voice of America could broadcast to the Soviet Union such critical material about its sitting President, she felt, “America was indeed a truly free country.”⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Interview with Cummins, August 10, 2004.

⁵⁷ Heil, *op.cit.*, 237.

⁵⁸ Barbara Cummins e-mail to the author, August 13, 2004.

CHAPTER 4

Cold War Radio Jamming

GEORGE W. WOODARD

Introduction

On the night of November 21, 1988, shortly after 9 p.m., I received a call at my home in Munich, Germany, from operators at the RFE/RL Technical Monitoring and Receiving station at Schleissheim, a northern suburb, reporting that Soviet and some Eastern European jamming of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty shortwave transmissions seemed to have abruptly ended. Jamming of RFE and RL signals (historically by far the hardest hit of all western broadcasters) as well as Voice of America, BBC, Deutsche Welle, Kol Israel, Radio Vatican and other stations had ended abruptly and without prior warning. So unbelievable was this development at the time that all my colleagues at RFE/RL and I could think to do was to "...keep listening—it must be a mistake." Throughout the night, into the next day, and in the days following it was confirmed; all but a few RFE programs were clear of the jamming noise and radio distortions that had plagued the shortwave bands in Europe and Eurasia for more than forty years. Jamming of the remaining RFE programs, primarily Czechoslovak and Bulgarian, stopped a few weeks later. It is difficult to describe the emotions experienced by those of us in international radio broadcasting regarding this monumental event. For four decades we had listened to, tolerated with irritation and frustration, and battled this phenomenon that was so foreign to the Western culture of freedom and exchange of information.

Some jamming continues today on the shortwave and, to a much lesser extent, medium-wave bands. China still jams Radio Moscow's Chinese-language services, as well as all Radio Free Asia programming to South Asia, and some VOA and other Western broadcasting services. Many Middle Eastern countries still jam each other, and Iran jams West-

ern broadcasts as well. Cuba still jams Radio and TV Marti. But the massive and all-pervasive jamming by the Soviet Bloc countries ceased in 1988—the first public evidence of the impending collapse of Soviet communism and the Soviet Union, and the forthcoming democratic transformation of Soviet-dominated East European nations.

History of Radio Jamming

The history of radio jamming, defined as intentional interference with radio, television, or other electronic communications,¹ dates back to the beginning of radio broadcasting. In the United States, where the broadcast bands were private, forces of competition (and greed and power) caused so-called “commercial” as well as religious broadcasters to vie for listener attention before the broadcasting bands became regulated by government. Frequency wars, where one broadcaster would trespass on the frequency used by a competitor, or power wars, where broadcasters incessantly increased transmitter power to gain an advantage over a competitor, were common in the United States, especially in metropolitan markets. Government regulation, growing awareness on the part of broadcasters that such behavior was actually counter-productive, and improvements in technology that eliminated unstable transmitter frequencies reduced these competitive jamming wars. Eventually the Federal Regulatory Commission (FRC), the precursor to the present Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in the United States, ended the frequency and power wars by strict licensing control of the carrier frequency and by limiting maximum carrier power to 50 kilowatts (kW).²

International radio jamming is extensively used during periods of armed conflict. This type of radio jamming targets not only broadcasting but, more importantly, tactical military and military-related radio communications. It began in World War I and has continued, as techniques and counter-techniques improve, during every war thereafter. Every

¹ The most comprehensive work on jamming is Rimantas Pleikys, *Jamming*. Vilnius, Lithuania: no date, approx. 1998, available in five languages at <http://www.radiojamming.info>. For a discussion of the types of jamming, see Appendix A to this Chapter.

² The “AM” band in North America, currently 535 to 1710 kilohertz (kHz), is referred to as the “medium-wave” band in most of the rest of the world. In this chapter “AM,” and “medium-wave” are used interchangeably.

country in the world has engaged in this type of intentional military radio jamming and many, to varying degrees and with varying methods, have engaged in jamming of foreign broadcasts to protect themselves from foreign ideas thought to be counter to established societal goals.³ Never, however, has the practice of jamming radio broadcast signals during peacetime been as blatantly exhibited as it was by the Soviet Union and its East European satellites against Western democracies. It began after World War II in 1946 and was organized in earnest in 1948.

In 1948, the Soviet Union commenced significant jamming of VOA and BBC broadcasts. This jamming had increased almost tenfold by the time jamming ended in 1988. Approximately 200 local and distant (sky-wave) jamming transmitters, with a total output power of approximately three-four megawatts in 1952, had grown by 1988 to approximately 1700 transmitters with an estimated total output power of 45 megawatts (see Table 1 and Figure 1). Operating these transmitters 24 hours per day at an estimated electrical cost of \$0.06 per kilowatt-hour amounted to an operational cost of \$48 million per year for electricity alone (assuming 50% transmitter efficiency), not including operational and maintenance labor costs, or capital costs. What started in 1948 as jamming of only VOA and BBC had grown by 1988 to include China Radio International (China also jammed foreign broadcasts from the Soviet Bloc and the West), Deutsche Welle, Kol Israel, Radio Korea, Radio Vatican, Radio Netherlands, and others. When Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty began their broadcasts directed solely at Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union in the early 1950s, they immediately began to bear the brunt of Soviet and East European jamming and continued to do so, with occasional interruptions for certain East European language services, until jamming ceased completely in 1988.⁴

The creation of VOA, RFE, RL, and other stations in the West was both politically and tactically motivated to help win wars. In the case of RFE and RL, this was the Cold War. VOA was founded as a natural out-

³ Jamming first became a political propaganda weapon in the 1930s. The first recorded instance of political jamming was by the Dollfuss government in Austria to prevent reception of Nazi German broadcasts attacking Austria. See Stanley Leinwoll, "The Problem of Congestion in the High Frequency Broadcast Bands," in *IEEE Transactions on Broadcasting*, June 1968, 56–68.

⁴ See Chapter Nine for a discussion of jamming of broadcasts to Poland, and documents in Part Six on "Regime Counter-Measures against Western Broadcasters."

growth of the Office of War Information (OWI) in 1943, while RFE and RL were created in 1950 and 1953 respectively to help win the Cold War that followed the defeat of the Axis powers in 1945. Radio Moscow, Radio Warsaw, Radio Prague, Radio Budapest, and others were created for the same basic purpose by the Soviet-bloc Communist authorities.

Table 1. A Summary of Local and Distant (Sky-Wave) Jamming Transmitters in the USSR and Eastern Europe in 1986

USSR (Beamed toward the USSR and East European Countries.)

Number of Sky-Wave Jamming Stations:	13
Approximate Number of Sky-Wave Jamming Transmitters:	130
Approx. Total Sky-Wave Jamming Transmitter Power (Megawatts):	30–32 MW
Number of Local Jamming Stations (USSR cities only):	81
Approximate Total Number of Local Jamming Transmitters:	1,200
Approximate Total Local Jamming Transmitter Power (Megawatts):	8–10 MW

EASTERN EUROPE

POLAND: Three Sky-Wave stations with a total of 15–20 transmitters beaming a total power of 750 to 1,000 kilowatts toward USSR, Bulgaria, and Czechoslovakia. (Local stations were dismantled in 1956.)

CZECHOSLOVAKIA: Four Sky-Wave stations with a total of 35–40 transmitters beaming a total power of 1,500 to 2,000 kilowatts toward USSR, Poland, and Bulgaria. Czechoslovakia also had a network of local jamming transmitters.

BULGARIA: Three-four Sky-Wave stations with a total of 30–35 transmitters beaming a total power of 1,500 to 2,000 kilowatts toward USSR, Poland, and Czechoslovakia. Bulgaria also had a network of local jamming transmitters.

ROMANIA ended all jamming in 1963.

HUNGARY ended all jamming in 1964.

See *Figure 1*. (p. 61.) for the location of the Soviet bloc jammers.

Source: Rimantas Pleikys, private communication with the author, 2004.

Intentional jamming of radio signals on the shortwave bands occasionally affected broadcasters who were not intended to be jammed. The Soviet jamming stations did try to restrict their jamming to the exact channel and signal bandwidth of the targeted Western transmitters. However, occasionally the bandwidth of the jamming signal was slightly wider than desired. This, together with the fact that many inexpensive-quality consumer receivers often had wider bandwidth than was desirable, meant the jamming signals often affected the lower and upper adjacent channel (and in some cases even the next adjacent channels) to the targeted jammed signal. This extra channel interference caused the jamming stations to be offensive to legitimate government, special interest, religious, and commercial stations also using the shortwave bands for their broadcasts. This situation was further exacerbated by the fact that there is some natural overlap of adjacent channel bandwidth on the medium-wave and shortwave bands.⁵

The Science of Counter-Jamming

During the Cold War, from 1946 to 1989, the only effective means of broadcasting to Soviet-controlled countries was via shortwave broadcast bands (High Frequency 3–30 megahertz (MHz)). The Soviet Union, in-

⁵ On the international shortwave bands, for example, the channels are spaced at 5 kHz. Yet, the internationally recommended modulated channel bandwidth is 4.5 kHz. This inevitably leads to the very likely possibility of 4 kHz overlapped interference on either the upper or lower adjacent channels by both stations—even without intentional jamming. However, the potential for interference between stations was greatly minimized through the use of quarterly frequency scheduling conferences among cooperating broadcasting administrations. This reduced the effect of intentional jamming on stations not intended to be jammed.

On the medium-wave band in North America, the channel spacing is 10 kHz while the total allowed modulation bandwidth is 20 kHz. This results in a 10 kHz adjacent channel overlap which explains the often undesirable reception characteristics on the medium-wave band during the nighttime, when signals travel long distances due to ionospheric propagation and where, for example, the upper sideband of one station completely overlaps the lower sideband of a neighboring station, and vice versa.

FM stations do not suffer from this anomaly, having 200 kHz spacing and an allowed modulated bandwidth of approximately only +/- 80 to 85 kHz. However, FM stations do not have the long-distance propagation capability of medium-wave at night or shortwave at almost any time of day or night.

cluding the satellite nations in Eastern Europe, covered 13 time zones. Direct satellite broadcasting was not a possibility until the mid-1980s and was not even practical then in the Soviet bloc due to technological, economic, and restrictive regulatory limitations. The Soviets broadcast to their own people on shortwave, and shortwave receivers of generally very high quality were available on the Soviet market. The VOA and BBC developed extensive shortwave capabilities during World War II, so that shortwave became the natural medium for cross-border broadcasting when the Cold War got underway.

The transmitter power levels at the end of World War II were typically 10 kilowatts, with a few special transmitters having 50–100 kW carrier power output. By 1950, 50 kW had become standard and by 1955, 100–250 kW had become typical of the high end range. About 1955, a US company received an order from the VOA for 16 250 kW transmitters, any two of which could be combined for a total output power of 500 kW. Radio Liberty had come into existence by then, and the VOA was directed to transfer four of the 250 kW units to the new RL transmitting station at Playa de Pals, Costa Brava, Spain. The RL station engineers took the technology a step further and arranged for the four 250 kW units to be fed into a four-bay curtain array antenna (250 kW into each bay) for a combined transmitter power of 1,000,000 Watts—the highest combined transmitter power ever achieved at that time.

Large antenna arrays were also important in achieving powerful (hence hard to jam) signals in the respective target areas. The curtain array antenna was developed in World War II for radar applications. This antenna was the standard for shortwave broadcasting by the late 1950s. A typical curtain array broadcast antenna in a 4 x 4 configuration (4 horizontal bays and 4 vertical stacks; i.e., 16 di-pole radiators) typically delivers a power gain of 100 or more. Power gain in an antenna is achieved by concentrating the transmitter's power output into a narrow beam pointed in the direction of the intended target. An antenna power gain of 100 means that a 250 kW transmitter has an effective radiated power of 25 million watts, or, in the case of the Playa de Pals combining system, 4 x 250 x 100, or 100 million watts.⁶

It was the jamming station's mission to effectively interfere with the robust signals generated by Western broadcasters. They did so with technology similar to that described above: high power transmitters and large

⁶ See Appendix B to this Chapter.

antenna arrays. The jamming network also used lower-powered “local” jamming transmitters located in or near large cities such as Moscow, St. Petersburg, Minsk, Kiev, Warsaw, Prague, and Budapest.

Local vs. Distant (Sky-Wave) Jamming

Shortwave signals are propagated in a unique way. Layers of ionized gases above the Earth’s atmosphere are created by radiation, mainly ultraviolet radiation, from the sun. These layers of ionized gases are called the ionosphere. They vary in thickness and range in height above the Earth’s surface between approximately 50 to 500 kilometers. Their virtual height and density vary according to time of day, time of year, and an approximately 11-year cycle that follows the radiation activity of the sun. (Historically proportional to sunspot activity on the sun’s surface, this 11-year cycle is often referred to as “the sunspot cycle.”) Shortwave signals reflecting off these ionized layers and back to Earth can potentially achieve very long “one-hop” distances of up to approximately 3500 km, depending on the angle of radiation from the antenna and the optimum frequency to reflect back to earth. The frequencies in the shortwave bands that reflect back to earth are dependent upon time of day, time of year, angle of radiation from the transmitting antenna (hence distance to the transmitting station), and the condition of the 11-year sunspot cycle.

The most effective way to jam a signal coming from the West at a distance of, say, 2500 km is to be located near the original transmitting station with nearly identical transmitting equipment. In the case of Soviet jamming of Western transmitters, this was of course not possible, so the Soviets had to locate their transmitters in the East at approximately 2500 km from the target, so that antenna radiation angle and ionospheric propagation characteristics would be similar to those of the original transmitting station. The transmitting carrier frequency and the bandwidth of the jamming station would, of course, have to be nearly identical to those of the station to be jammed.

For jamming purposes, the Soviet bloc utilized approximately twenty times the number of transmitters as all the Western stations with which they were attempting to interfere. The VOA had approximately 30 transmitters dedicated solely to broadcasting to the Soviet bloc; the BBC about another 30; RFE and RL a total of 57 transmitters in all. Deutsche Welle, Kol Israel, Radio Netherlands, and others totaled approximately

another 30 transmitters targeted on the Soviet bloc, making up a grand total of approximately 150 Western broadcasting transmitters that the Soviets were intent on jamming.

Due to the vagaries of ionospheric propagation, sometimes the jamming stations would win the signal battle, and sometimes the programming stations. To augment their sky-wave (ionospheric) jamming, the Soviets also employed local jamming stations near the major metropolitan areas. However, due to the propagation characteristics of high frequency shortwave signals, these local jamming transmitters were effective only within a radius of approximately 15–20 kilometers. There is hard evidence from many former listeners to Western radio broadcasts that it was not uncommon for families to take a drive in the country, away from town, for the purpose of a picnic, just a drive, or any other excuse imaginable, to escape the effect of the local jamming station. Once far enough out of town, the picnic, or whatever, would be set up—always accompanied by a shortwave radio. It was not illegal to own or listen to shortwave because, as mentioned earlier, the Soviets broadcast to their own citizenry via shortwave during the Cold War, and Russia still utilizes domestic shortwave broadcasting today.

In addition to the technique of overwhelming force displayed in the number of transmitters broadcasting on multiple frequencies, and in very high radiated power, another very successful technique used to counter Soviet jamming was “twilight immunity.” This phenomenon is explained graphically by the sun map shown in Figure 2. As previously mentioned, shortwave propagation varies according to time of day, day of year, and the so-called 11-year sunspot cycle. As can be seen from Figure 2, there is a short period of a few hours during the day when signals from the West propagate (in this case to Moscow) at daylight conditions, while jamming signals from the East to the same target area propagate at nighttime conditions. Conversely, there is a similar period 12 hours earlier (or later) when nighttime conditions exist for the Western stations and daytime conditions for the jamming stations in the East. (A characteristic of shortwave propagation is that some frequencies propagate better under daytime conditions and others propagate better under nighttime conditions.)

The advantage here lay with the stations in the West because it is they who determined the frequency to be transmitted. The jamming stations could not determine the frequency but had to follow the lead of the broadcasting stations they wished to interfere with. As a result, the broad-

casting stations in the West established frequencies they knew would propagate to Moscow (in the example shown in Figure 2), knowing that jamming stations in the East would fail to propagate to the same target on those same frequencies. This gave the stations in the West a distinct advantage for a period of one-five hours at dawn and dusk each day, depending upon the yearly season and the condition of the 11-year sunspot cycle.

Channel Effectiveness vs. Program Effectiveness

The vagaries of shortwave propagation, which Mother Nature can change on a whim, and which are often scientifically unpredictable, have spawned a practice almost universal to all shortwave broadcasters to “simulcast,” that is, to broadcast simultaneously on several frequency bands, to increase the probability that at least one of the frequencies will propagate to the desired target. For unjammed services, the number of simulcast frequencies is typically three, though it might range from two to five depending upon the broadcaster and the program. For jammed transmissions, the US Government, in close consultation with RFE/RL and VOA, established nine simulcast transmissions as a target minimum. During the height of the cold-war, RFE/RL simulcast as many as 27–33 transmitters, hence 27–33 simultaneous frequencies, for portions of RL’s Russian language service during certain periods of the year.

This practice increased dramatically the probability that at least one frequency would get through. At a minimum, it is theoretically possible that each of 20 transmitters, hence 20 frequencies, may have only a 5% success rate, but that program effectiveness would be 20×5 , or 100%. This of course is an extreme example. In practice, each channel, in the presence of jamming, had an average channel effectiveness rate of approximately 15–20%, so that it took fewer frequencies to achieve a program effectiveness of 100%.⁷

⁷ According to Stanley Leinwoll, in a personal communication with the author, 2004: The definition of Channel Effectiveness (CE) is: “the % of frequencies heard with fair or better intelligibility on a given program;” whereas the definition of Program Effectiveness (PE) is: “the % of a program heard with fair or better intelligibility on at least one frequency.”

Critical to the success of these anti-jamming techniques was the dedication of radio listeners in the East. When one frequency began to fade, either because of the whims of Mother Nature or because of jamming, determined listeners would at once search for, and more often than not find, another useable frequency on either the same or another shortwave band. Unlike military anti-jamming techniques (where clear channels can be changed at the transmitting end, either after sending coded messages to the receiving end to change channels, or according to predetermined schedules) anti-jamming procedures in the Soviet bloc depended upon listeners' skill and rapidity in manipulating their radios to obtain an acceptable signal. Given that broadcast frequencies were coordinated with other broadcasters and scheduled three to six months in advance, the "real time radio agility" had to be accomplished at the receiving end by the receiving operator—in other words, the shortwave listener! But the eagerness of listeners in the Soviet bloc to hear the voices of freedom coming from the West was so great that they learned how to master shortwave radio, thus maximizing the effectiveness of the anti-jamming techniques.

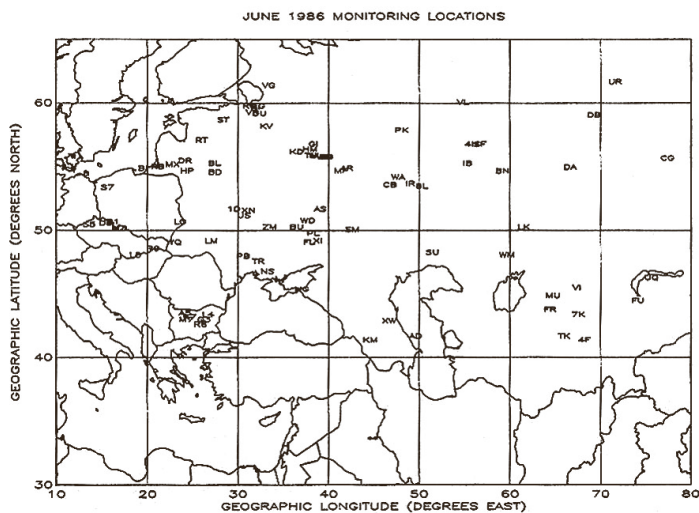
Besides simulcasting as described above, all of the Western broadcasters repeated programs periodically (daily, weekly, monthly, or at longer intervals) to increase the probability of complete program reception.

Figure 1 shows the known locations of Soviet and Eastern European jamming station locations marked by their Morse code identifier. These Morse code identifiers, required by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), were, typically, alphabetical letters only for the Soviet Union stations, and letters plus numerals for the East European locations. When the Soviets discovered that these identifiers were being logged by direction-finding techniques in the West, they began shifting them around every two weeks or so, seemingly at random, without notifying the ITU of these changes.

It is worth surmising here that the reason jamming of the Bulgarian and Czechoslovak language services of RFE/RL did not cease on November 21, 1988, in concert with the abrupt cessation of other jamming, was that this jamming was coming from Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia, not the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, as mentioned earlier, this jamming also ceased by late December 1988.

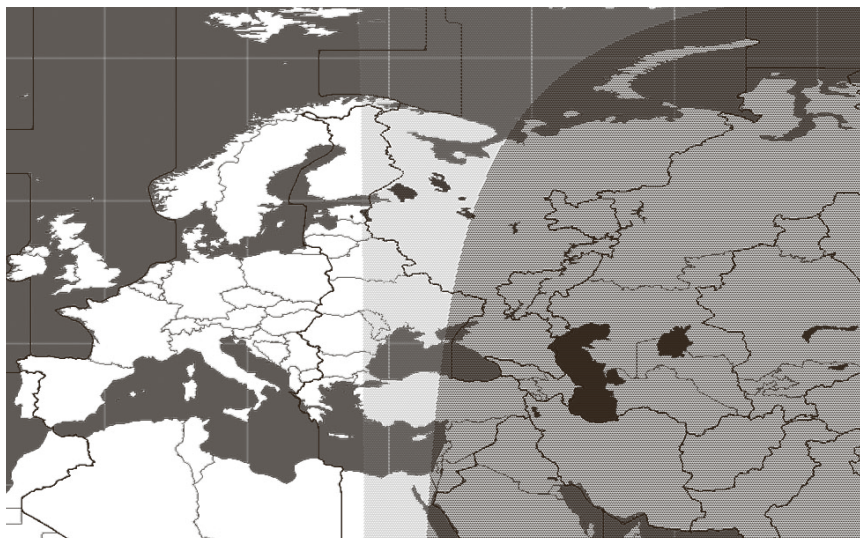
The data in Figure 1 were gathered in June 1986, two and a half years before Soviet jamming ceased. Each location had numerous transmitters and antennas that could jam signals from Western stations including RFE/RL, VOA, BBC, DW, KI (Israel), and also CRI (China).

Figure 1. Location of Known Soviet and East European Jamming Stations, June 1986



Source: M.W. Sowers, G. Hand, and C.M. Rush, “Jamming to the HF Broadcasting Service” in *IEEE Transactions on Broadcasting*, June 1988, 112.

Figure 2. Sun Map Showing Phenomenon of “Twilight Immunity” in Russian Jamming



Time shown is Spring Equinox, 16:00 UTC.

Stations in the West that were one “hop” (one bounce off the ionosphere) from Moscow (such as RFE/RL stations in Spain or Germany) could select daytime propagation frequencies that would not propagate from Russian jammer locations in the East with nighttime propagation conditions. (Daytime conditions are shown on the left-hand side of the map. Nighttime conditions are shown in the darkened area on the right.) A similar situation would have existed approximately 12 hours earlier or later, giving stations in the West a nighttime propagation advantage over jamming stations in the East that had only daytime conditions. This map is shown to illustrate only the basic principle of twilight immunity, since the exact propagation advantages of daylight vs. nighttime are more detailed and complex.

In this example, signals from Playa de Pals (Costa Brava) Spain would reflect off the ionosphere over the area near Wroclaw, Poland and back down to the Moscow area, which appears very near to the night-to-day transition line on the sun map of Figure 2. The reflection point off the ionosphere, the approximate area over Wroclaw, is in the daylight.

During the height of the Cold War, numerous attempts were made to put the jamming locations farther west in Soviet-controlled East Germany, Poland, Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia, in order to combat twilight immunity. This tactic was partially successful, but its success was limited by the number of jamming transmitters available, and by the higher angle of antenna radiation required by closer stations which meant that it was still difficult to achieve the required shortwave propagation characteristics with regard to the intended target. Transmitters further to the west, such as Playa de Pals, still had a propagation advantage thanks to a low angle of signal radiation that could not be matched by the closer stations in the east.

Conclusion

Throughout the Cold War, the West’s attempt to inform and influence the Soviet and East European populations via radio broadcasts met with extreme resistance by the Soviet and East European authorities. They jammed radio broadcasts from several Western countries, including the United States (VOA, Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty), Great Britain (BBC), Germany (Deutsche Welle), Netherlands (Radio Nederland), Israel (Kol Israel), Radio Vatican, and others. This intentional interfer-

ence on the international airwaves was contrary to both ITU recommendations and to treaties in which the Soviet Union was a participating member as well as a signatory. It was expensive for Western broadcasters to fight the jamming, but even more expensive for the Communist authorities to carry out the interference. Both sides utilized advanced technological methods: the West to generate powerful signals to broadcast information to which the Soviet and East European citizenry would not otherwise have access, and the Communist authorities to prevent this information from getting through. This technical battle continued for over 40 years until one night in 1988, when it ceased suddenly and hopefully (in this part of the world) forever.

Appendix A

Types of Jamming

One type of jamming consists of random or pseudo-random speech that simulates a supposedly legitimate interfering co-channel station. This type of jamming was used by the Soviets early in the days of jamming to camouflage their intent. It was not effective because a committed human listener can acoustically discard the jamming speech and concentrate only on the desired speech, and because this skill can be enhanced and improved through practice.

A second type of jamming is an improved technique that makes no attempt to disguise the jamming intent. It consists of a random noise signal, very similar to the noise heard on an FM radio when no signal is present. It is much more effective than the ‘random speech’ type of jamming because it is more difficult for the human listener to psycho-acoustically differentiate between the desired speech patterns and the high level of random noise.

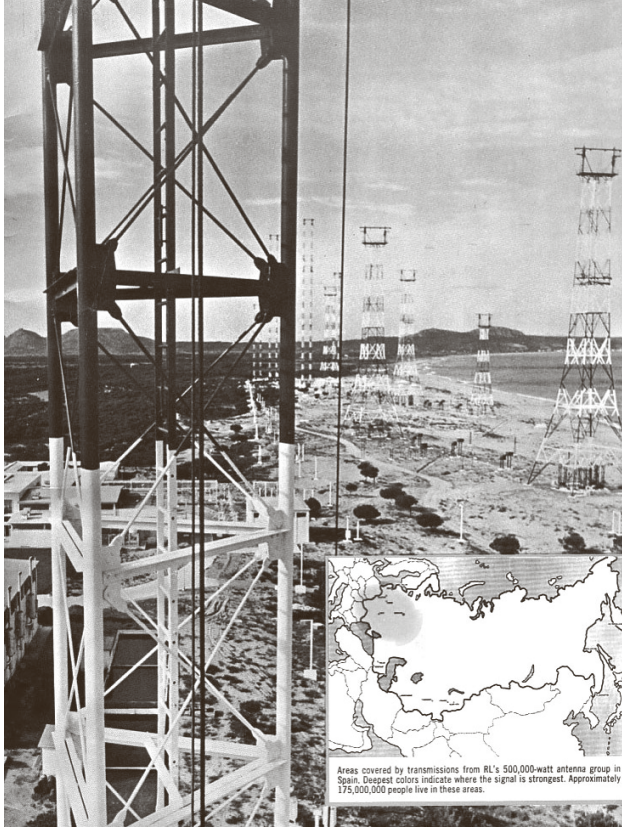
The third and most effective type of jamming is the jamming signal technique that the Soviets and their Eastern European satellites first began using in the early 1970s, and which they relied on almost exclusively by the early 1980s. It uses a swept or swinging carrier signal (frequency modulation) over a narrow range of sweeping modulation rates centered at approximately 2–4 kHz, the most sensitive and hence the most disturbing frequency range for a human listener. The frequency-modulated or swinging carrier also created a variable heterodyne interference with the desired station’s carrier signal.

None of these jamming techniques were effective unless the jamming signal was stronger than—or, in the ‘swinging carrier’ case, approximately equal to—the desired signal.

Samples of these types of jamming may be found on Rimantas Pleikys’ website <http://www.radiojamming.info/>

Appendix B

An Example of a Shortwave Broadcasting Station during the Cold War



The Radio Liberty (later RFE/RL) station at Playa de Pals, Spain, was located in an optimal location on the Costa Brava with all its antennas pointed toward Moscow. Some were designed for one-hop coverage of the Moscow region. Playa de Pals was in such a unique location that, in addition to one-hop coverage of Moscow, all the higher mode hops also fell on Soviet territory, reaching as far as the Soviet Far East in two, three or four hops. The “Group D” antenna shown above at the left of the photo, the farthest north up the coastline, was the only US-owned and operated antenna with an eight stack of di-pole elements, yielding a take-off angle of 4.3 degrees above the horizon—an unmatched low take-off angle.

The same “Group D” antenna was arranged so that four 250 kilowatt transmitters could be fed into it at the same time, yielding the equivalent of one million watts of transmitter power—the only antenna in the US government arsenal of shortwave broadcasting antennas to have such capability.

CHAPTER 5

The Audience to Western Broadcasts to the USSR During the Cold War: An External Perspective¹

R. EUGENE PARTA

Survey data on Radio Liberty's audience during the failed coup in August 1991 was available within days of the event. It showed widespread listening to the station. (A survey carried out a few weeks after the coup by *Vox Populi*, a leading Moscow research institute, showed that 30% of Muscovites heard Radio Liberty during the crisis days of 19–21 August, and that most of these either listened constantly or several times a day.²) This was not the case during most of the station's history, when the Soviet Union was off-limits to Western survey researchers. Western radio broadcasting was considered "ideological subversion" and any attempt at researching the audience for the benefit of a Western broadcaster would have been considered little short of espionage, especially in the case of Radio Liberty.

¹ For a fuller treatment of this subject, see R. Eugene Parta, *Discovering the Hidden Listener: An Assessment of Radio Liberty and Western Broadcasting to the USSR During the Cold War* (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 2007). The RFE/RL reports cited below are available in the RFE/RL Collection at the Hoover Archives.

² The survey was carried out by Vox Populi on 11–12 September 1991 with a sample size of 1,000. Thirty-nine percent of the respondents said they listened to foreign radio broadcasts during the crisis: 30% heard Radio Liberty, 18% BBC, 15% VOA and 7% Deutsche Welle. The results were published in "Crisis Compendium: Analyses of Media Use in the USSR During the Coup Attempt," Report #1017/92, Media and Opinion Research, RFE/RL Research Institute, January 1992. Other studies carried out by local research institutes in the USSR published in this compendium showed high rates of listening to Radio Liberty's Russian service during the coup: Kiev 24%, Tbilisi 18%, Tallin 17%, Riga 38%, Yerevan 30%, Lithuania 35%. Listening was also high for broadcasts in the local languages (Ukrainian, Georgian, Estonian, Latvian, Armenian and Lithuanian), but generally lower than in Russian.

Given that it was impossible to carry out classic audience research within the USSR itself, second-best methods had to be employed. The fallback method was to interview systematically travelers from the Soviet Union who were temporarily outside their country.³ Beginning in the early 1970s, emigrants from the USSR, primarily Jewish, but also some ethnic Germans, were also interviewed. These research efforts were directed by the Soviet Area Audience and Opinion Research (SAAOR) unit of RFE/RL, located in Paris.⁴ The actual interviewing was carried out by independent research institutes in a neutral manner that did not prejudice results in favor of a single broadcaster. The data were relied upon by all the major Western broadcasters to the USSR for their basic estimates of audience size and listening behavior.

During the 1950s and 1960s, the interviewing of travelers produced primarily *ad hoc* anecdotal evidence of listening, which provided useful insights but permitted few general inferences. By the early 1970s, data collection had been systematized to the point that preliminary generalized estimates could begin to be made about audience size and composition. During the period 1972–1990, more than 50,000 interviews with Soviet travelers were conducted and analyzed using a sophisticated mass media communications computer simulation model developed at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).⁵ Since that part of the Soviet population which was allowed to travel to the West was demographically and ideologically skewed, highly robust methods were required to counteract those biases. Travelers tended to be more male, more urban, more educated, more middle-aged and more likely to be members of the Commu-

³ For a short history of how this interviewing effort developed see R. Eugene Parta, "Soviet Area Audience and Opinion Research (SAAOR) at Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty" in *Western Broadcasting Over the Iron Curtain*, ed. K. R. M. Short (London, Sydney: Croom Helm, 1986), 227–244.

⁴ Audience Research at Radio Liberty was founded in 1954 by Dr. Max Ralis, who continued as Director until his retirement in 1981. He was succeeded by the present author, who had been working with Ralis since 1969. Dr. Ralis, who came to Radio Liberty from Cornell University, was a pioneer in developing a wide range of techniques, both qualitative and quantitative, to study Soviet audiences to Western broadcasts.

⁵ For details on the MIT simulation methodology, as well as for more details on the interviewing procedure used in the 1970s, see R. E. Parta, J. C. Klensin and I. S. Pool, "The Shortwave Audience in the USSR: Methods for Improving the Estimates," *Communications Research*, Vol. 9, No. 4 (October 1982), 581–606. Interviewing methods in the 1980s took on a more formal aspect.

nist Party than the population at large. While the MIT simulation program could correct for the demographic skew, there was no real way to correct for the fact that travelers had been carefully screened for loyalty to the Soviet state. This might have had an impact on their willingness to admit to listening to certain Western radio stations—such as Radio Liberty—that were considered ideologically antagonistic.

Throughout this analysis, for reasons of convenience, the term “sample” will be used to refer to the Soviet traveler data. This does not mean to imply that the sample of travelers is a random, scientific sample in the usual sense of the term. It should rather be taken to mean a survey group of respondents reconstructed by the MIT simulation program in such a way as to be representative of the adult population of the USSR.

In addition to the traveler survey, an entirely separate project, also managed by SAAOR, surveyed over 25,000 legal emigrants from the USSR on their media habits before emigration. This research could be conducted with the straightforward administration of a detailed questionnaire. Emigrant data were not used for estimating audience size in the Soviet Union, but provided much useful detailed information on listening behavior and permitted cross-checks to validate the internal consistency of the traveler data. Another source of useful information for the radios, although it could not be used to estimate audience size, was listener mail. Thousands of letters were received over the years, and their many first-hand accounts of listening behavior, along with their positive or critical comments, were of inestimable value to the broadcast services.

We do not claim that the research approach used by SAAOR during the Cold War produced results that would have been as accurate as surveys freely conducted within the USSR using state-of-the-art methodology. All research findings reported here have to be understood within the confines of that caveat. There are always limits to accuracy, and when direct impediments are placed in the way of the research process those limits can be severe. The data, however, do provide a remarkable body of internally consistent findings with high face validity, and we feel confident that they offer valuable insights into the role played by Western radio during the Cold War period. Along with the data on media use, a considerable amount of attitudinal data was gathered. As the size and quality of the database increased in the 1980s, and analytical methods became more refined, our understanding of the listeners gained in depth and richness. Through the careful analysis of this extensive database, it became possible to provide broadcast management with crucial informa-

tion allowing them to adapt programming in order to better meet listeners' needs and desires.

When the Cold War ended and research could be conducted within the USSR, and later in the successor states to the Soviet Union, it became clear that our earlier measurements and understanding of audience behavior were firmly grounded, and that no major reassessments were required. Subsequent surveys conducted inside Russia after the fall of the USSR bore out the finding of widespread listening to foreign radio stations during the Cold War period and the importance of Western broadcasts to the Soviet peoples.

Early Attempts to Quantify the Audience to Western Radio: the 1970s

As noted above, research on listening to Western radio in the USSR was essentially anecdotal or based on listener mail until 1970, when systematic surveying of Soviet travelers to the West began. The initial survey data were too unrepresentative of the Soviet population to permit general inferences concerning the size of audiences to the different Western broadcasters. It was not until 1973 that the MIT computer simulation methodology was applied to the data, and an attempt was made to project the survey data on to the larger population of the USSR.⁶

The initial rough projections, based on some 2,000 respondent cases from 1970–1972, showed VOA with the largest audience of all the Western broadcasters—a position it was to hold until jamming was lifted on Radio Liberty in November 1988. This first application of the MIT simulation estimated that on a “typical” day VOA reached about 6% of the Soviet adult population, followed by Radio Liberty at 2.8% and BBC at 1.5%. All “other stations” combined were estimated to reach 7.2%. Cumulative weekly reach estimates were 23% for VOA, 11% for Radio Liberty, 5% for BBC and 26% for the “others.”

An important finding of this first attempt to quantify audiences showed that there was very little overlap between the two American stations, VOA and Radio Liberty. To a large degree, the audience to each station was different, both in demographic terms and in language of lis-

⁶ See Ithiel de Sola Pool, “Soviet Audiences for Foreign Radio,” USIA R-17-76, September 1976, with summary prepared by the Office of Research, United States Information Agency.

tening. The audience to VOA was relatively young, about three-quarters urban, and about evenly split between men and women. Radio Liberty, on the other hand, had a somewhat older audience, less urban, slightly better educated and strongly represented in the Union Republics.⁷ This was consistent with the program offer of each station. Although both stations had a strong news orientation, VOA carried considerably more entertainment and US-oriented programming, while Radio Liberty, as a “surrogate” broadcaster, focused on political and cultural aspects of its broadcast area, the USSR, and was on the air in more regional languages.

Although these first general findings were encouraging, subsequent survey data throughout the 1970s showed audiences listening at somewhat lower rates. It is difficult to determine whether the later figures indicated real shifts in audience size, or if they reflected improved data collection techniques that produced a demographically more diverse sample. Table 1 shows weekly reach rates for the four major broadcasters: VOA, Radio Liberty, BBC and Deutsche Welle through the remainder of the 1970s.⁸

Table 1. Estimated Weekly Reach Rates for Major Western Broadcasters to USSR: 1973–1980

	1973–74 N=2,438	1975–76 N=2,804	1977–78 N=2,256	1979–80 N=2,431
VOA	19%	19%	15%	15%
BBC	11%	8%	7%	8%
Radio Liberty	9%	6%	4%	7%
Deutsche Welle	5%	6%	6%	5%

In the 1973–74 data, a now un-jammed BBC moved ahead of Radio Liberty in terms of weekly reach, and VOA’s audience estimate declined from the 1970–72 data. (From 1973 to 1980, only Radio Liberty was subject to heavy jamming. Jamming was lifted on VOA, BBC and Deutsche Welle in 1973 in the climate of détente.)

Given the refinement of surveying techniques and analytical methodology during the early and mid-1970s, it seems likely that the earliest estimates from 1970–1972 should best be viewed as general approxima-

⁷ Ibid., ii.

⁸ Parta, Klensin, Pool, op. cit., 603.

tions. It was not until the late 1970s, after survey methods had been improved to procure a more diverse sample, and the MIT computer simulation methodology had been further refined, that annual audience estimates could be used to determine listener trends with a high degree of confidence.⁹ These estimates will be examined in more detail below.

Weekly Reach of Western Broadcasters: 1980–1990

This section will focus on tracking audiences to Western radios during the 1980–1990 period when annual data bases were larger, data collection had become more routinely systematized, and the MIT computer simulation software was more specifically adapted to the needs of SAAOR. Consequently, we have more confidence in these estimates than in those for the 1970s shown above.

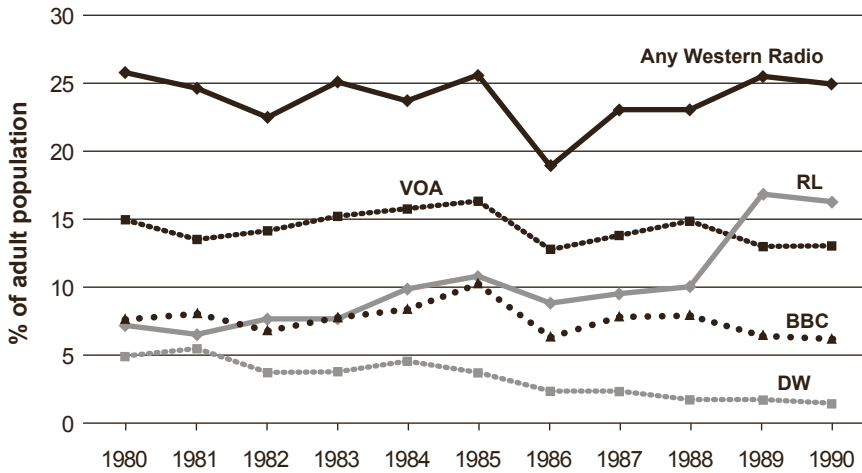
The cumulative weekly reach of the major Western broadcasters to the USSR for this period is shown in Figure 1. (Cumulative weekly reach is the percentage of the population reached in the course of an average week. It will be referred to simply as “weekly reach” hereafter.) A reasonably consistent pattern emerges throughout the period. The unduplicated weekly reach of the combined Western broadcasters oscillated around 25%. VOA had the highest weekly reach, at around 15%, until it met direct competition from an un-jammed Radio Liberty in 1989. BBC was firmly anchored in the 5–10% range and Deutsche Welle hovered around 5% until 1986, when it began a slow but steady decline to around 2% in 1990.

The only station showing a major shift was Radio Liberty. The audience began a slow climb from around 7% in 1980 to around 10% in 1985, where it stayed until jamming ended in November 1988. At that point, its audience dramatically increased. In terms of weekly reach, Radio Liberty became the leading Western broadcaster in terms of audience size in 1989 and 1990.

Of course neither the broadcasting nor the listening took place inside a vacuum. In order to better understand the dynamics of listening

⁹ See R. Eugene Parta, “Weekly Audience Estimates for Major Western Broadcasters to the USSR: January 1973–June 1980,” AR 10-80, Soviet Area Audience and Opinion Research, RFE/RL, Inc., December 1980. This report added separate estimates for the “urban population” as well for the four major broadcasters.

Figure 1. Weekly Reach of Major Western Broadcasters in the USSR
Among the Total Adult Population 16 years and older: 1980–1990



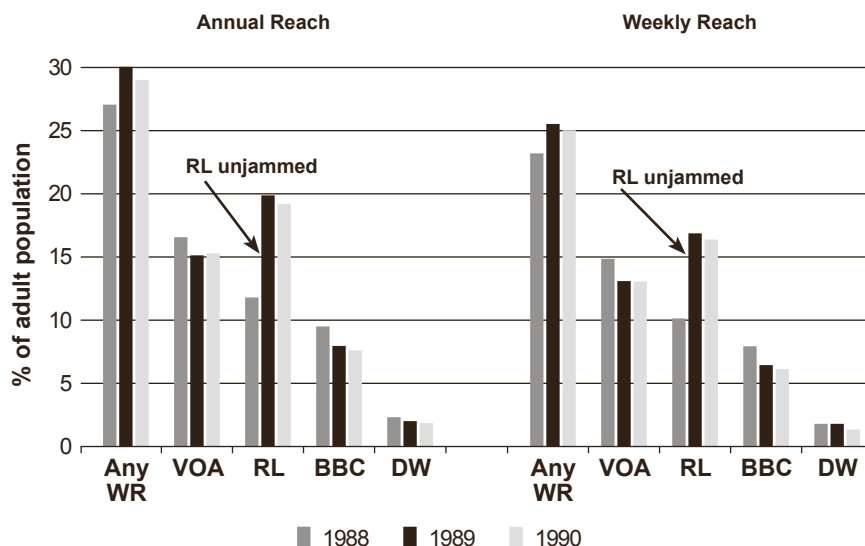
trends, it is important to view them against a double backdrop: on the one hand, Soviet jamming of the broadcasts, and on the other, events both inside and outside the USSR which might trigger increased interest in listening.¹⁰ Issues such as improvements in transmission capabilities or changes in programming emphasis are beyond the scope of this analysis.

Listening to Western Broadcasts in the Last Years of the USSR: 1989–1991

As noted above, after the final cessation of jamming of Radio Liberty in 1988, audiences to Radio Liberty rose sharply in 1989, even though overall listening to Western radio increased only slightly. Figure 2 shows clearly the changes that took place between 1988 and 1990: a major increase in listening to Radio Liberty and minor decreases in listening to the other stations. Most of the new listeners to Radio Liberty came at the expense of other Western broadcasters, although some were genuinely new listeners to Western radio.

¹⁰ These factors are treated in more detail in Parta, *Discovering the Hidden Listener*, op cit.

*Figure 2. Shifts in Listening to Western Radio 1988–1990:
The Impact of the End of Jamming on Radio Liberty*



In 1989, completely new listeners to the station accounted for about 16% of Radio Liberty’s audience.¹¹ A substantial majority of these new listeners heard Radio Liberty exclusively in Russian, which was the only service to benefit from round-the-clock broadcasts. Although these new listeners resembled the station’s long-term listeners in being urban and educated, there was evidence that there were more women and more younger people (under 30 years of age) among the new listeners than in the traditional audience which had built up under conditions of jamming.

Listening in the Geographic Regions of the USSR: Overall Patterns in 1989

By 1988–1989, annual sample sizes had grown to a level (5,233 in 1988 and 4,593 in 1989) where it became possible to improve the methodol-

¹¹ Mark Rhodes and Amy Corning, “Radio Liberty Attracts Many New Listeners in 1989,” RM 1-90, Soviet Area Audience and Opinion Research, RFE/RL, Inc. March 1990.

ogy for deriving listening estimates for different regions of the USSR.¹² Although these estimates are less robust than the aggregate estimates for the entire USSR, they do provide insight on how listening was distributed across the country, and on the impact of broadcasting in the nationality languages. Figure 3 gives a regional breakdown of weekly listening to the major stations for 1988 and 1989. The increases shown in listening to Radio Liberty in 1989 are undoubtedly due to the cessation of jamming in November 1988.¹³

Figure 4 below refers to listening in any language and does not distinguish between listening in Russian and in the nationality languages. While all four broadcasters were on the air in Russian, only Radio Liberty and VOA broadcast extensively in the nationality languages of the USSR (RFE/RL broadcasts in Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian were under the RFE name. For the sake of convenience they will be included in the Radio Liberty figures in the following chart.)¹⁴ Consequently, Radio Liberty and VOA had an advantage over BBC and Deutsche Welle in the non-Russian areas.

Radio Liberty drew its highest listening rates in the politically-charged centers of Moscow and Leningrad. It was considerably less heard in the provincial European and Siberian parts of the RSFSR. In the non-Russian areas, its reach was highest in the Baltic States, where nationalist feeling ran high, Ukraine, the Trans-Caucasus and to a slightly lesser extent in Belorussia. Rates were lower in Moldavia and Central Asia.

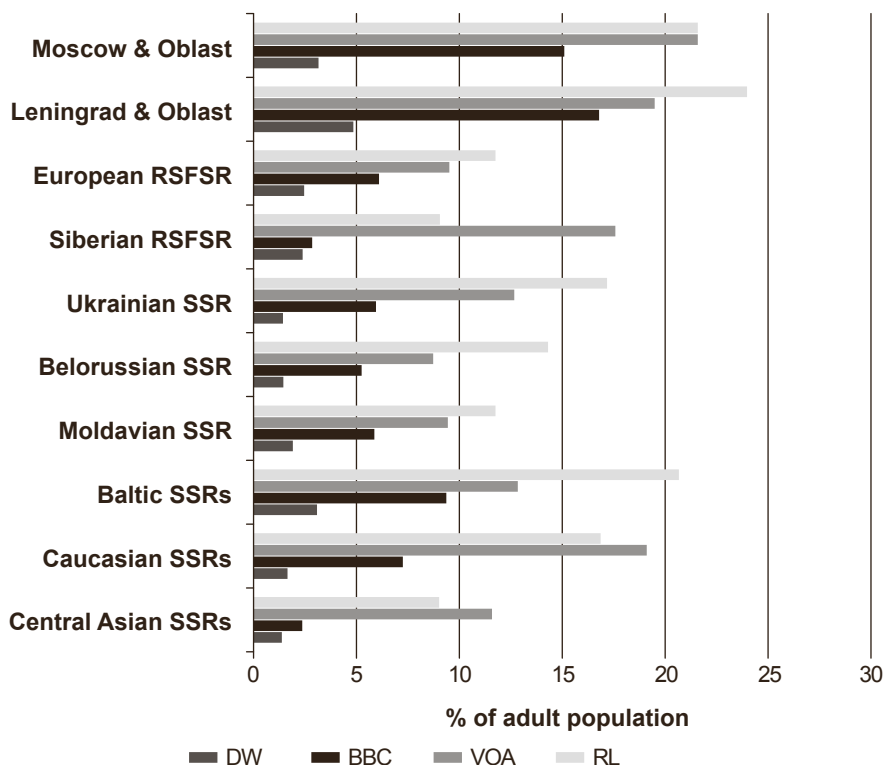
VOA showed a high rate of listening in Moscow and Leningrad, as well as in the Siberian RSFSR, where it may have benefited from a stronger shortwave signal than the other broadcasters. It led Radio Liberty by a short head in the Trans-Caucasus and Central Asia, but showed lower

¹² R. Eugene Parta and Ree Dawson, "Revised Geographic Listening Estimates to Foreign Radio in the USSR: Introduction of Log-liner Imputation Techniques for Geographic Estimates," AR 2-90, June 1990. Soviet Area Audience and Opinion Research, RFE/RL, Inc.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 5–14.

¹⁴ In 1988–1989 Radio Liberty broadcast to the USSR in Armenian, Azerbaijani, Belorussian, Georgian, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Russian, Tajik, Tatar–Bashkir, Turkmen, Ukrainian and Uzbek. Additionally RFE broadcast in Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian. VOA broadcast in Armenian, Azerbaijani, Estonian, Georgian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Russian, Ukrainian and Uzbek. BBC broadcast only in Russian. Deutsche Welle broadcast in Russian and Ukrainian.

Figure 3: Weekly Reach of Western Radio in Ten Regions of the USSR: 1989



rates in the Baltic States, Ukraine and Belorussia (VOA did not broadcast in the Belorussian language).

BBC again had high rates in Moscow and Leningrad, but trailed significantly in other areas, with the exception of the Baltic States, where its Russian-language broadcasts had a strong following. Deutsche Welle displayed a similar pattern but with lower overall rates.

The Overall Annual Audience to Western Radio: 1980–1990

Regular listeners to Western radio were supplemented by those who tuned in only occasionally, often in response to specific events. Combining the weekly audience and the occasional audience gives the total annual reach of the broadcaster.

Figure 4. Annual Reach of Western Broadcasters to the USSR:
1980–1990

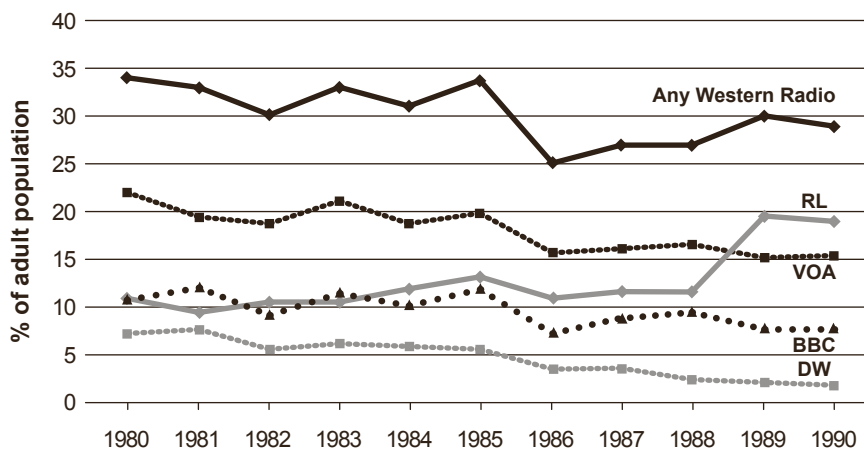


Figure 4 shows the total annual reach of each of the major Western broadcasters to the USSR. These figures indicate the potential for audience expansion during times of major crisis. The annual reach curves for individual stations follow a similar pattern to the weekly reach curves, but at higher rates.

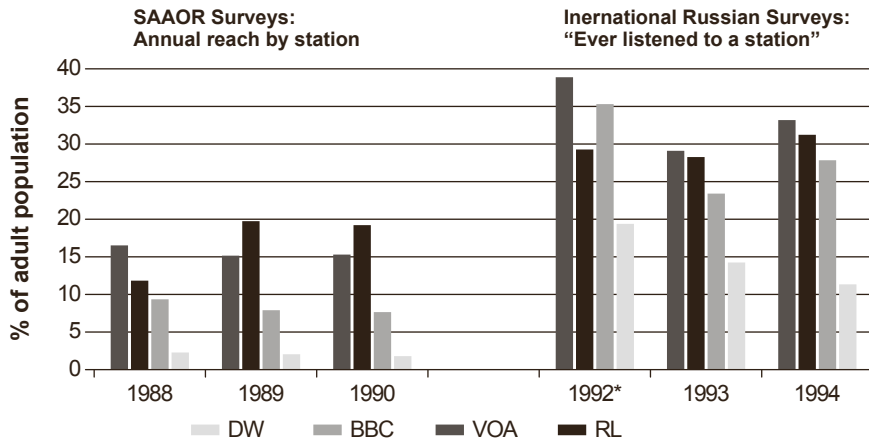
As was noted earlier for weekly reach, the aggregate annual audience to Western radios dropped sharply from 1985 to 1986 and then increased in 1987 and 1988 when jamming was removed in two stages. However, the higher annual reach rates noted in 1980 and 1985 were never regained. In 1990 SAAOR estimated that about 29% of the adult population of the USSR was being reached by Western radio on at least an occasional basis.

While these percentages were high, they did not do justice to the actual number of people being reached. In 1989–1990, Western radio was reaching ca. 25 million people on an average day and over 50 million in the course of a week. At this point, it does not seem unjustified to speak of a critical mass of the population of the USSR who were receiving information on the Soviet Union and on the world from Western radio.

Comparison with Internal Surveys to Confirm Audience Estimates

In 1991, it became possible to conduct surveys on Western radio listening inside the USSR, and later the Russian Federation, using local research

Figure 5: Comparison of Findings from SAAOR Surveys 1988–1990 and Russian Surveys 1992–1994



*1992 Vox Populi Survey, 1993–1994 ROMIR Surveys

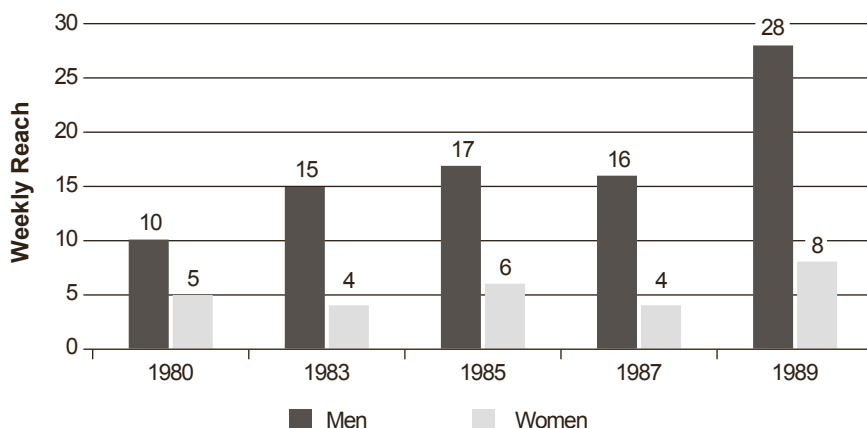
institutes. The first surveys conducted bore out our earlier estimates of a large aggregate audience to Western broadcasts during the Cold War period.

Surveys conducted by Russian research institutes in the early 1990s suggested that up to half of the adult population had been reached at one time or another by Western broadcasters during the Cold War. This was an important confirmation of the findings of SAAOR research, and of the impact that the stations made during that period.

Figure 5 shows the percentage of people who said that they had “ever listened” to a given Western broadcaster. (Included here are VOA, BBC, Radio Liberty, and Deutsche Welle).¹⁵ In 1992, in a survey conducted by the Institute of Sociology at the Russian Academy of Sciences, those who said they had “ever listened” to a specific Western station ranged from around 30% to around 55% (these figures are not included in Figure 15 below). These rates were somewhat lower in a 1992 survey conducted by Vox Populi and in 1993–1994 surveys conducted by another

¹⁵ For the sake of convenience, only the four major broadcasters which had the largest audiences are included here. Of course, there were many other international broadcasters to the USSR, among them Radio France International, Radio Canada International, Radio Sweden, and Radio Vatican, but their audiences were generally smaller and because of this difficult to project onto the general population in the MIT simulation.

Figure 6: Weekly Reach of Radio Liberty by Gender: 1980–1989



er leading Moscow institute, ROMIR.¹⁶ Even if one were to hypothesize that the 1992 survey rates may have been on the high side (and possibly affected by exceptionally high rates of listening recalled during the August 1991 coup), the 1993 rates of “ever listened” to Western broadcasters, which fluctuated in more or less the same range through the end of 1999, would put the range of the Cold War audience between 30%–40% (or even higher, given that overlap in listening to stations is not total).

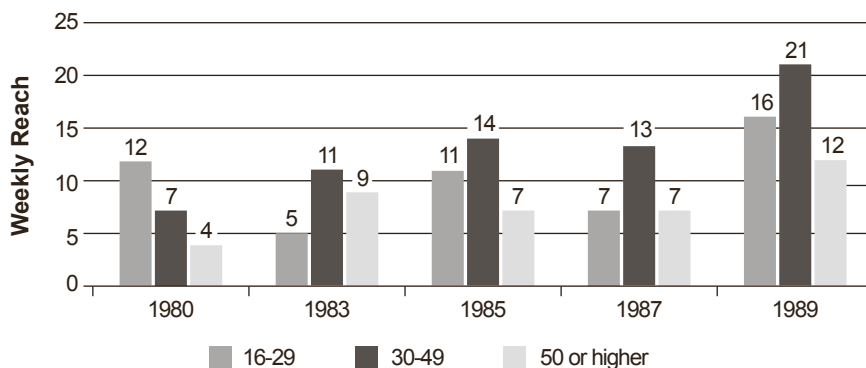
Findings on annual reach for the major Western broadcasters in SAAOR traveler surveys in 1998–1990 all fit comfortably within the results from internal Russian surveys conducted in 1992, 1993 and 1994 on those who had “ever listened” to a given station. This increases our confidence that the earlier SAAOR estimates were credible and reasonable.

Demographic Characteristics of Listeners to Radio Liberty

Both Western radio in general and Radio Liberty in particular showed their greatest relative appeal among males with a secondary or higher ed-

¹⁶ The Moscow-based independent research institute ROMIR conducted the surveys during the period 1993–2001. They were published in RFE/RL’s Media and Opinion Research Report series in 1993 and 1994 and thereafter by InterMedia Research Institute, the successor organization to MOR.

Figure 7: Weekly Reach of Radio Liberty by Age: 1980–1989



ucation living in urban areas.¹⁷ It can be argued that this description also fits those most likely to be interested in politics, as well as those owning radio receivers capable of picking up a signal through jamming. This profile also corresponds to the type of programming carried by Western radio, which, apart from some music programs targeted at young people, was designed primarily for an urban intelligentsia.

Figures (6–9) show weekly listening trends to Radio Liberty among different demographic groups from 1980 through 1989, the first year the station benefited from an un-jammed signal.

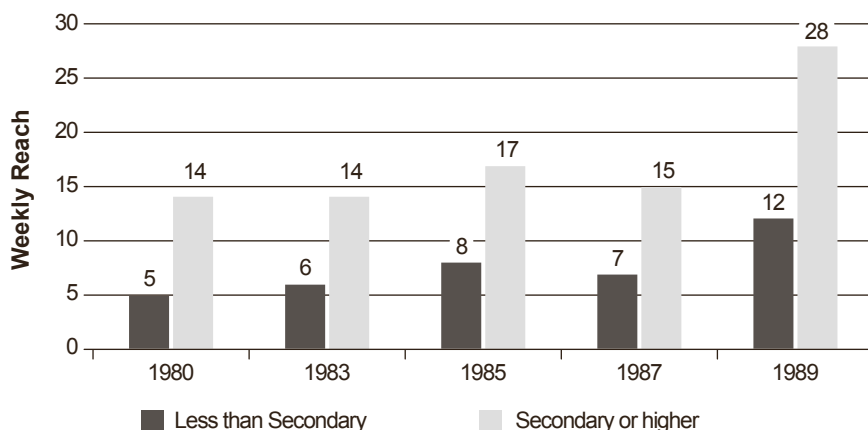
Men dominated Radio Liberty audiences throughout. It is noteworthy that the lifting of jamming at the end of 1988 led to a doubling of the listening rates of both the male and female audiences (see Figure 6).

The relative appeal of Radio Liberty to different age groups shows an interesting shift throughout the 1980s (see Figure 7).

In 1980, at a time when increasing Soviet engagement in Afghanistan led to the US boycott of the Moscow Olympics, the highest weekly rate of listening to Radio Liberty was among those under 30 years of age. In 1983, the highest listening rate returned to the 30–49 year group, where Radio Liberty’s appeal was always traditionally the strongest, while the younger group dropped by more than half. In 1985, younger listeners came back, but the 30–49 year group remained dominant. In 1987, when jamming ended on VOA and BBC, the younger group again left Radio Liberty, presumably for the un-jammed stations. In 1989, with an

¹⁷ Here the Soviet Census definitions for rural and urban are used. “Urban” areas may go down to settlements as small as a few thousand people.

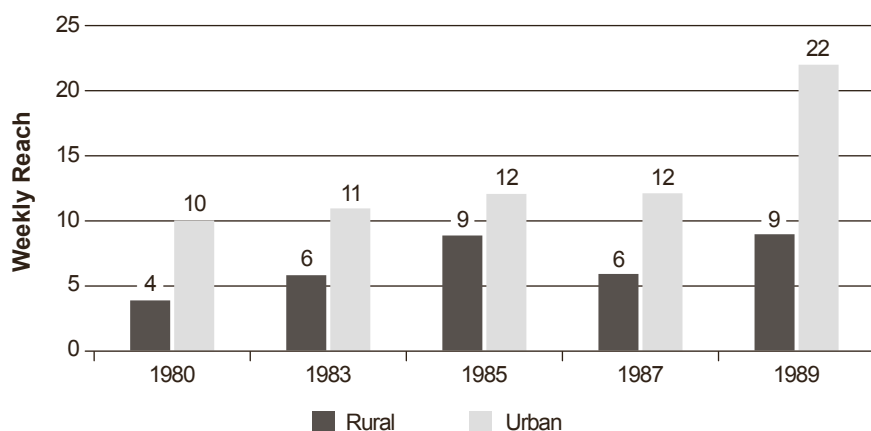
Figure 8: Weekly Reach of Radio Liberty by Education: 1980–1989



un-jammed signal, listening rates among both the young and the 30–49 year group more than doubled, while listening rates among the over-fifties also increased, but not quite as dramatically.

Listening rates by education showed a consistent trend throughout the 1980s. People with secondary or higher education usually listened at rates about twice as high as those with lower educational levels (see Figure 8). The highest rates of all were found among those with higher

Figure 9: Weekly Reach of Radio Liberty by Rural or Urban Residence: 1980–1989



education. After cessation of jamming, rates among the “educated” almost doubled, from 15% in 1988 to 28% in 1989.

Despite the fact that audibility of Radio Liberty was usually better in rural than in urban areas, the station appealed essentially to an urban audience (see Figure 9). For one thing, educational levels were higher in urban areas, for another, Radio Liberty’s programming was essentially targeted at an educated urban audience.

Western Radio Listening by Attitudinal Type

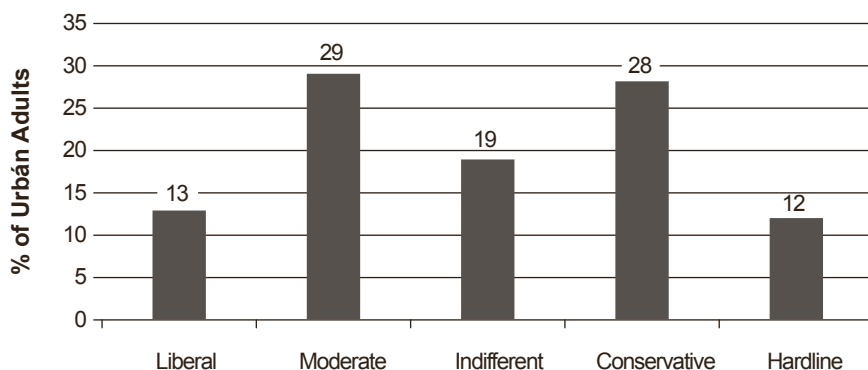
It is hardly surprising that personal political orientation was a major determinant of Western radio listening. Not only was this an important predictive indicator of listening to Western radio, it also correlated in different ways with specific international broadcasters.

In 1984, SAAOR published an attitudinal typology of urban Soviet citizens based on over 3,000 interviews with Soviet travelers to the West in the late 1970s and early 1980s.¹⁸ Five questions, determined on the basis of a factor analysis, broadly segmented the population on a spectrum from “hard-line” to “liberal” according to their attitudes toward civil liberties in the USSR. Figure 10 gives the breakdown of the urban population of the USSR in terms of these five attitudinal types.

“Liberals” and “hardliners” were at roughly equal strength in the urban population, with one in eight subscribing to one or the other position. “Moderates” and “Conservatives” mirrored each other as well, with approximately three in ten in each camp. About one in five urban Soviet citizens could be classified as “indifferent” or neutral, holding down the center of the scale. In terms of media use, the “liberals” were significantly more likely to be listeners to Western radio than any of the other types.

¹⁸ R. Eugene Parta, “Civil Liberties and the Soviet Citizen: Attitudinal Types and Western Radio Listening,” AR 6-84, Soviet Area Audience and Opinion Research, RFE/RL, Inc. The study was based on a factor analysis of the data that isolated five questions (from a total of 14 that had been used during the survey period) that correlated highly on the issue of civil liberties to build an attitudinal scale which was then projected on to the urban population of the USSR using the MIT computer simulation methodology. The questions dealt with attitudes to issues such as freedom of speech, dissent, legality, the right to emigrate and racial tolerance. The methodology is explained in greater detail on pages 16–29 of the report.

Figure 10. Attitudinal Types in the USSR (Urban Population)



Almost 80% of the group said that they listened to the broadcasts (see Figure 11).

“Liberals” used word-of-mouth as an information source at higher rates than any other group, suggesting that information gathered from Western radio sources received an amplifier effect by being passed on through

Figure 11. Media Use by Attitudinal Types in the USSR

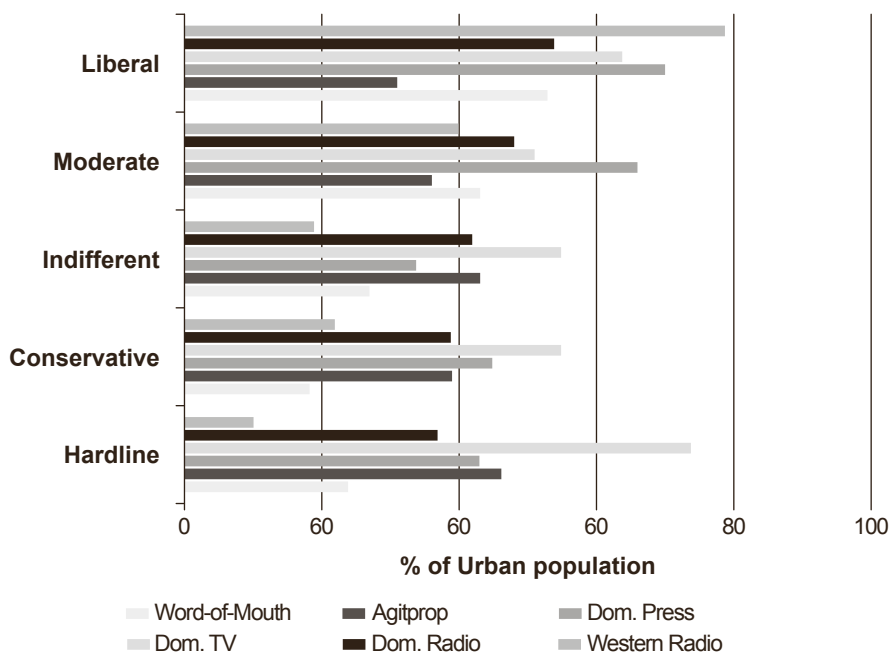
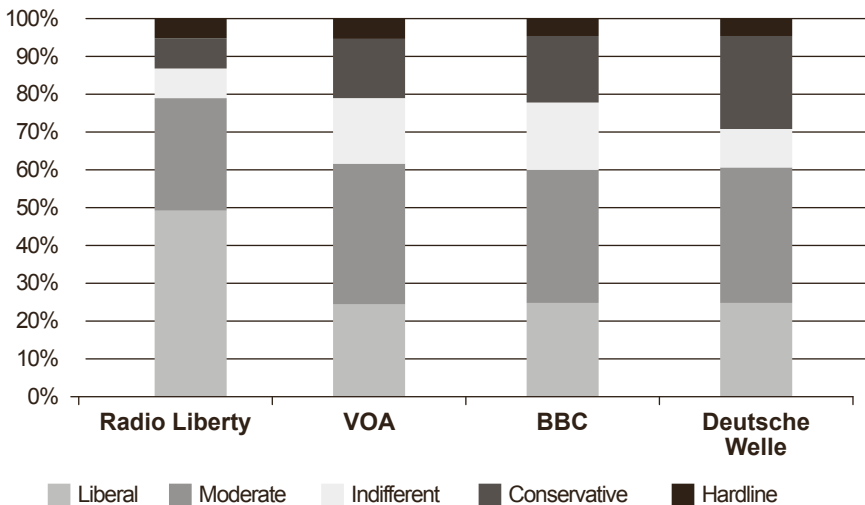


Figure 12. Audiences to Western Broadcasters by Attitudinal Type

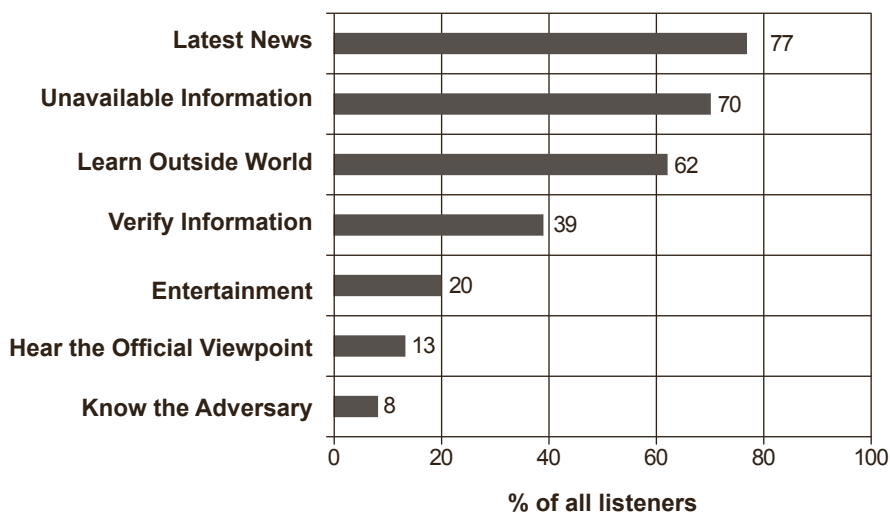


word-of-mouth communication. “Moderates” also used word-of-mouth communications at relatively higher rates than their more conservative counterparts, again giving a booster effect to the messages conveyed by Western broadcasters. “Hardliners” tended to rely on domestic TV as their main information source and made little use of Western radio broadcasts.

The individual Western stations attracted different types of listeners in terms of political orientation. Figure 12 shows that half of Radio Liberty’s audience was composed of “liberals,” and that another 30% were “moderates,” giving it a sharper ideological profile than the other major broadcasters. In light of the more hard-edged political broadcast style of Radio Liberty this is not surprising. The audiences to VOA, BBC and Deutsche Welle were all dominated by “moderates,” who outnumbered the “liberals” two to one in the urban population.

These findings imply that if Radio Liberty had wanted to increase its audience in 1984, a wise strategy might have been to re-position the broadcasts to increase their appeal to “moderates.” On the other hand, this would have been problematic, given that the station was the prime target of the Soviet jamming network, and that only the most committed listeners were willing to make the extra effort to tune in through constant intense jamming. A blunting of its political edge could have cost Radio Liberty listeners among the “liberals” without adding many among the “moderates.”

Figure 13. Motivations of Soviet Citizens for Listening to Western Radio Broadcasts: 1985



Motivations for Listening to Western Radio

As their primary motivation for tuning in Western radio broadcasts, Soviet respondents to the SAAOR traveler surveys cited the desire to hear uncensored news, followed by the need to obtain information not available from sources within the USSR (see Figure 13)¹⁹. A third reason was to learn first-hand about the outside world from non-Soviet sources. Verifying or disproving information already received from the Soviet media was another important motive. Seeking entertainment was also a motivation for listening but, at 20%, it ranked relatively low. This may underestimate the real interest of Soviet audiences in the music and entertainment programs of Western radios. Listener mail to these programs was considerable, and there is a great deal of anecdotal evidence attesting to their popularity. The relatively low rating for entertainment in the traveler surveys may be an artifact of the methodology. Travelers as a group were likely to be much more interested in politics than the average Soviet citi-

¹⁹ Mark Rhodes, "Perceptions of Western Radio: How Soviet Citizens View Radio Liberty, VOA, BBC and Deutsche Welle," AR 3-85, Soviet Area Audience and Opinion Research, RFE/RL, Inc.

zen, while younger people who listened heavily to music programs were less likely to be able to travel outside the USSR.

Hearing the “official viewpoint,” a category usually reserved for government-sponsored stations such as VOA, BBC and Deutsche Welle, was important to about one in seven listeners. A few claimed that they listened to Western broadcasts in order to better understand their Western “adversaries.” Whether this was a genuine motivation, or merely a disingenuous response, is difficult to gauge, but it was a reason occasionally cited, notably by Communist Party members.

As categories are not always comparable, specific motivations for listening from previous surveys are not given here, but they follow the same basic pattern. Information always scored much higher than entertainment as a primary motivation for listening. Survey data from 1987 showed that 91% of respondents said they listened to get information of various kinds, while only 13% noted entertainment as a primary motive.²⁰ It’s noteworthy that, in the *perestroika* year of 1987, 13% claimed “moral support” as a motivation for listening to Western broadcasts.

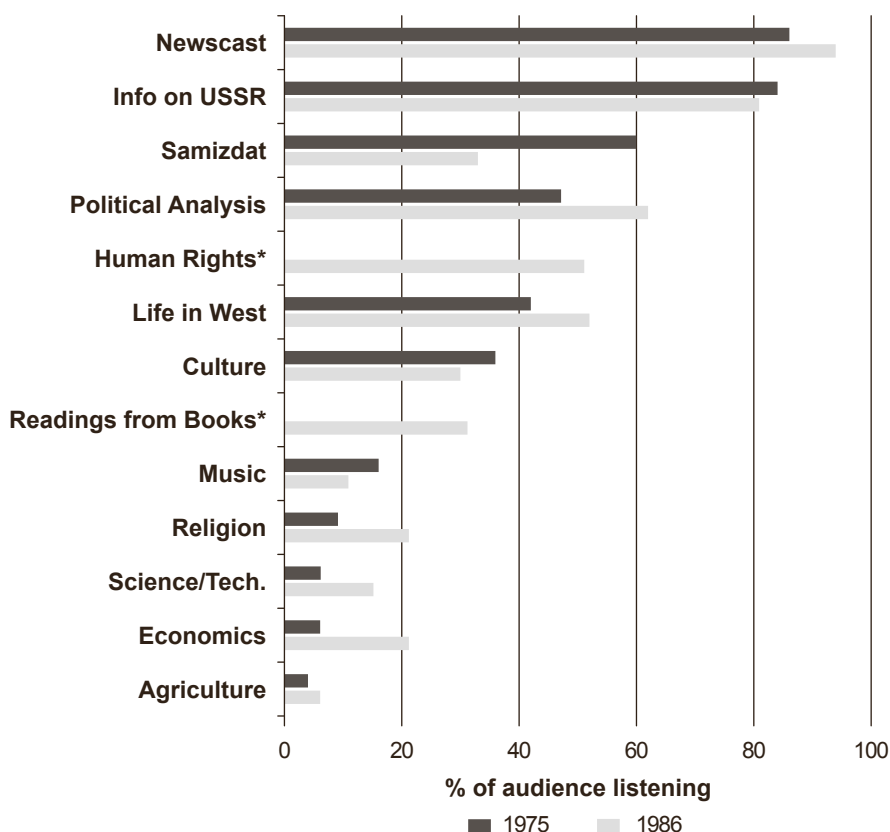
Motivations for listening to specific stations generally followed this basic pattern, with a few important nuances. Radio Liberty was singled out for its coverage of the USSR and its programming for non-Russian nationalities, and it was also used as a way to verify domestic Soviet information, or to get otherwise unavailable information. VOA was often cited for its coverage of the West and generally high quality programming, including entertainment shows, while BBC was noted for its “objectivity.”

Choice of Programming from Radio Liberty

In terms of the type of programming they preferred to hear on Radio Liberty, listeners invariably selected the latest news, and information focused on the USSR. However, in the decade spanning the period 1975 to 1986, from the time of the Brezhnev *zastoi* (stagnation) to Gorbachev’s *per-*

²⁰ Mark Rhodes and Patricia Leroy, AR 4-87, “Comparative Audience Perceptions of Major Western Broadcasters to the USSR,” Soviet Area Audience and Opinion Research, RFE/RL, Inc.

Figure 14. Radio Liberty Program Preferences: 1975–1986



estroika, a number of interesting shifts can be seen in other areas (see Figure 14)²¹.

While *samizdat* was a key audience favorite in the Brezhnev years, singled out by six in 10 listeners, by 1986, when *perestroika* was underway and the Soviet press had begun to shake off some of the shackles of censorship, the rate had dropped by half. What formerly could only be expressed in *samizdat* form could, in the *glasnost* period, often be open-

²¹ Data for this chart are taken from R. Eugene Parta, "Listening to Radio Liberty in the USSR: 1976–77" (AR 3-78), and Mark Rhodes, "Patterns of Listening to the Russian Service of RL" (AR 3-87), Soviet Area Audience and Opinion Research, RFE/RL, Inc.

ly debated in the Soviet press, thus denting part of the unique appeal of Western radio.

Political analysis and programs on life in the West remained important throughout Radio Liberty's history, but showed an increase in 1986. At this time, straight information was much more available in the USSR than hitherto, but there was often a lack of relevant analysis. Survey respondents throughout the *perestroika* period frequently noted that they now had access to information, but lacked competent analysis to place it in context and make sense of it.

"Human Rights" and "Readings from Books" (usually books that originated in the USSR but were not allowed to be published there, such as works by Solzhenitsyn or Pasternak) were a continuing staple of Radio Liberty broadcast fare and resonated strongly with its "liberal" audience.

In the *perestroika* period, we also saw increasing interest in programs on religion, and in applied topics such as science and technology and economics. Now that reform was on the Soviet agenda, listeners sought out practical information on how to live in a society that was moving beyond traditional Marxist-Leninist ideological strictures. Radio Liberty's programming adapted to these new circumstances and evolved from a largely "dissident" perspective in the Brezhnev years to a more all-round focus on politics and information by 1986.

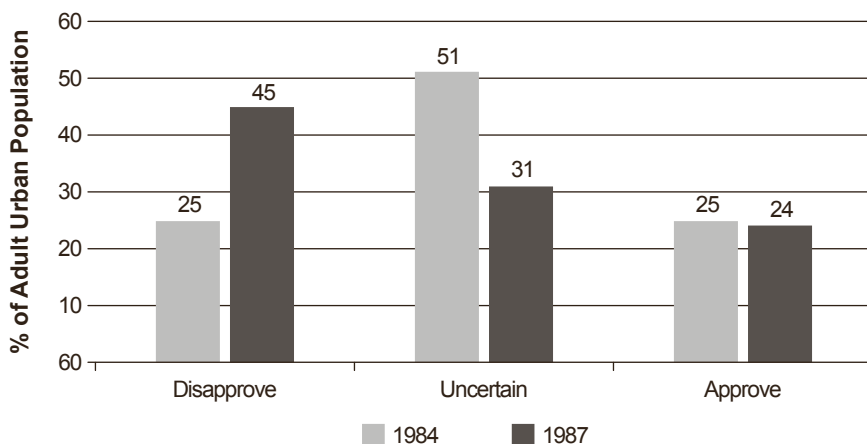
Western Radio and Topical Issues

Examining the role played by Western radio and Radio Liberty in forming listeners' opinions on specific events can be instructive in helping to understand the stations' larger impact on their audience. Over the years, SAAOR placed a range of topical attitudinal questions in its traveler surveys. They allow us to take a close-up view of Western radio listening behavior in specific circumstances. Here we will look at the fateful Soviet military involvement in Afghanistan, the 1983 Korean airliner incident, and the 1986 Chernobyl disaster.

The War in Afghanistan: 1979–1989

SAAOR began gathering data on the attitudes of Soviet citizens to the war in Afghanistan in the early 1980s, and published its first findings on

Figure 15. Attitudes Toward Soviet Policy in Afghanistan among Urban Adults: 1984–1987



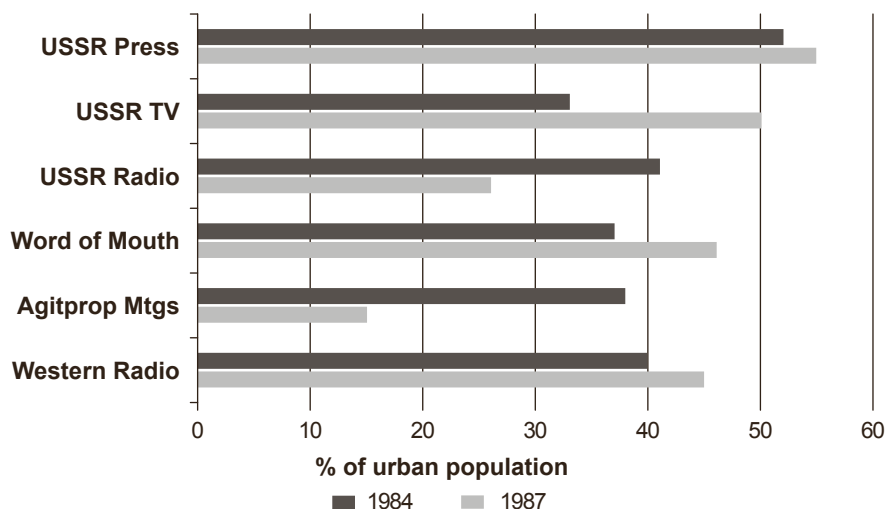
the subject in 1985.²² In 1988, a trend report tracing the evolution of attitudes toward the war, and the role that Western radio played in informing Soviet listeners (based on 6,059 data cases), showed that disapproval of the war had risen from one-quarter of the population in 1984 to almost half in 1987, while those who held no opinion dropped from about half to one third (see Figure 15).²³ Those who had been uncertain in their attitudes toward the war moved to disapproval, while approval rates held steady. In the early years of the war, respondents tended either to minimize its importance and avoid expressing a viewpoint, or to recite stereotyped responses based on domestic Soviet propaganda. It was only after several years of involvement in Afghanistan that clearly-defined attitudes toward the war began to be expressed by a majority of respondents in the traveler survey.

An analysis of information sources on Afghanistan show that Western radio played a significant role in informing the Soviet population about the war. Figure 16 below shows that in 1987 ca. 45% of the urban population received information on the war from Western radio, com-

²² Sallie Wise, "The Soviet Public and the War in Afghanistan: Perceptions, Prognoses, Information Sources," AR 4-84, Soviet Area Audience and Opinion Research, RFE/RL, Inc.

²³ Sallie Wise, "The Soviet Public and the War in Afghanistan: Discontent Reaches Critical Levels," AR 4-88, Soviet Area Audience and Opinion Research, RFE/RL, Inc.

*Figure 16. Sources of Information on the War in Afghanistan
Among the Soviet Adult Urban Population: 1984–1987*



pared with around 55% who cited the Soviet press, and 50% who cited Soviet TV. Word-of-mouth was indicated by about 46% of respondents, roughly the same proportion who cited Western radio. As noted above, there is a high correlation between using Western radio and word-of-mouth as information sources.

*Agitprop*²⁴ meetings were cited by ca. 38% of respondents in 1984, but this figure dropped to 15% in 1987. It may be surmised that, by 1987, as the war began to go badly and the problems encountered began to receive attention in the Soviet press, *agitprop* speakers were less inclined to confront critical audiences on this thorny topic.

When attitudes toward the war were correlated with information sources on the war, it became apparent that those who received their information from Western radio or via word-of-mouth communication were considerably more critical of Soviet policy than those who relied on official sources (see Figure 17). While users of all information sources saw

²⁴ *Agitprop* comes from “agitatsiia and propaganda” and in this context refers to structured meetings, briefings and lectures held in local Party organizations, at the workplace and in other public venues. This was a highly developed system in the USSR and served as a channel for the Party to get its views and positions across to its membership and to the larger population.

*Figure 17: Disapproval of USSR Policy in Afghanistan
by Information Source: 1984–1987*

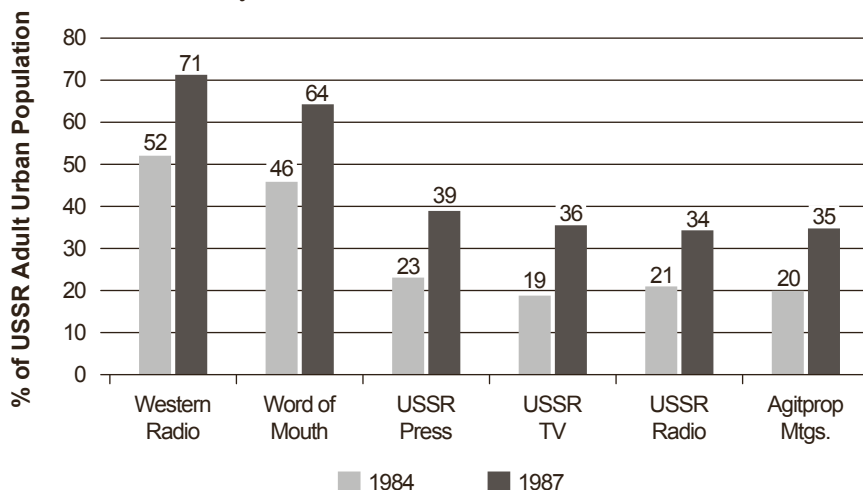
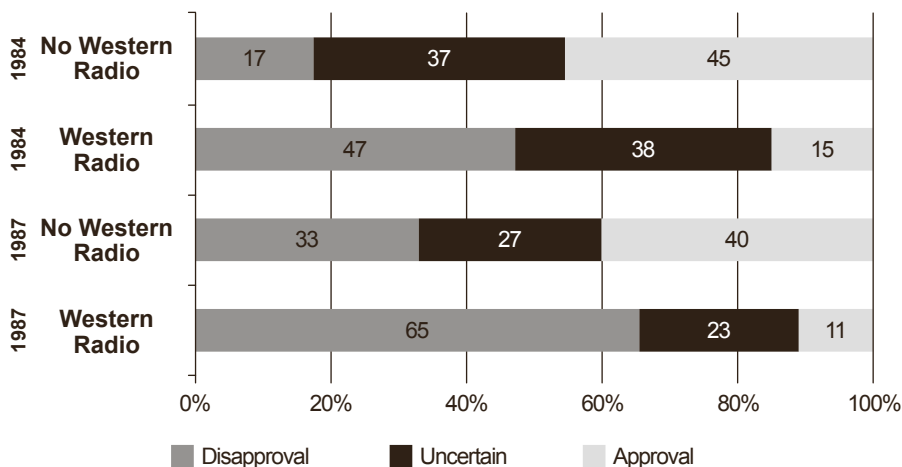


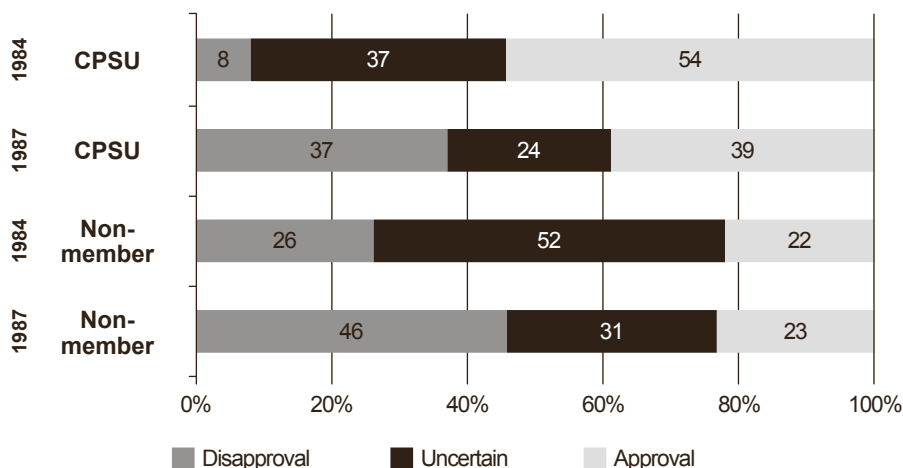
Figure 18. Attitudes to USSR Policy in Afghanistan Among Listeners and Non-Listeners to Western Radio: 1984–1987



the war more negatively in 1987 than in 1984, the critical rate for Western radio listeners attained 71%, followed by 64% for word-of-mouth.

In 1984, Western radio listeners in general were roughly three times more critical of the war than non-listeners (see Figure 18).

Figure 19. Attitudes to USSR Policy in Afghanistan
by CPSU Membership: 1984–1987



In 1987, about two-thirds of Western radio listeners disapproved of the war and only about one in nine supported it. Clearly, information on the war supplied by Western radio played an important role in spreading anti-war sentiment among the Soviet population. It is also important to note the doubling of disapproval among non-listeners. Under *glasnost*, critical coverage of the war began to appear in 1987 in the Soviet press.²⁵ Information from soldiers returning from Afghanistan was widespread throughout the population, and this, coupled with continuing coverage of the war by Western radio, created a situation where official media had to move beyond a narrow propaganda-based approach to the war if they were to maintain any credibility at all.

Criticism of the war had surfaced in the CPSU ranks by 1987, according to SAAOR data. In 1984 only 8% of Party members disapproved of the war but this proportion had increased to 37% by 1987 (see Figure 19 below). Support dropped from 54% in 1984 to 39% in 1987. When the Party rank and file began to lose faith in the war effort, the Afghan adventure was clearly doomed.

²⁵ Sallie Wise, "The Soviet Public and the War in Afghanistan: Discontent Reaches Critical Levels," op.cit., 12–13.

Secretary Gorbachev announced in February 1988 that the USSR would withdraw its military forces from Afghanistan, and the pull-out was completed a year later.

The Case of the Korean Airliner Incident

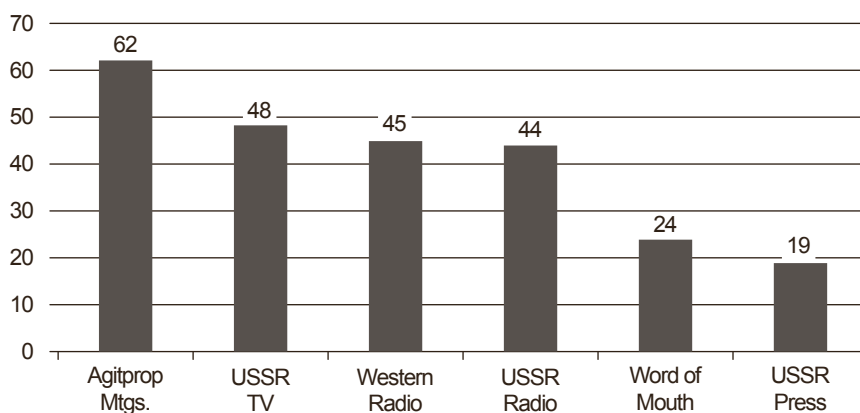
The Soviet downing of flight KAL 007 on September 1, 1983 provided a clear test of the efficacy of Western radio. The version of events communicated to Soviet listeners was almost diametrically opposed to that of official Soviet sources. In the two months immediately following the tragic incident, SAAOR, in the course of its normal survey program, queried 274 Soviet citizen travelers on their reactions to the incident and their sources of information on it.²⁶

From the outset, Western broadcasters to the USSR gave heavy coverage to the KAL incident. Soviet media, however, during the first week of September, restricted their discussion of the affair to cryptic hints that a foreign plane had violated Soviet airspace. Not until September 7 did *Pravda* acknowledge that the Korean Airliner had been shot down by Soviet air defense. This signaled the launching of a full-scale media and *agitprop* campaign aimed at mobilizing domestic opinion in support of the government's position. In view of the sheer volume of commentary on the incident, it is not surprising that almost all respondents claimed to be aware of the event. In fact, 62% of them said they had heard about the KAL incident from *agitprop* meetings (see Figure 20 below). It's quite possible that many of the respondents had been briefed before traveling abroad so that they would know how to respond "correctly" to questions on the topic.

Western radio, mentioned by 45% of respondents, compared favorably with Soviet TV and domestic radio as an information source. However, a striking dichotomy in attitudes was found between those who had heard about the incident on Western radio and those who had only heard the official Soviet version. About eight in ten of the non-listeners to Western radio accepted the official Soviet version of events, while only 18% of the Western radio listeners found the Soviet version credible (see Figure 21). Over half the Western radio listeners believed the version of the

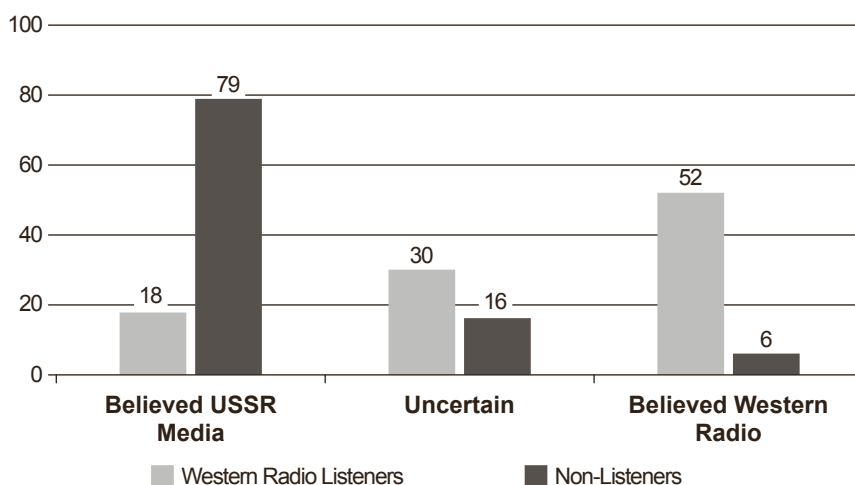
²⁶ R. Eugene Parta and Kathleen Mihalisko, "The Korean Airliner Incident: Western Radio and Soviet Perceptions," AR 4-84, Soviet Area Audience and Opinion Research, RFE/RL Inc.

Figure 20. Sources of Information on the KAL Incident

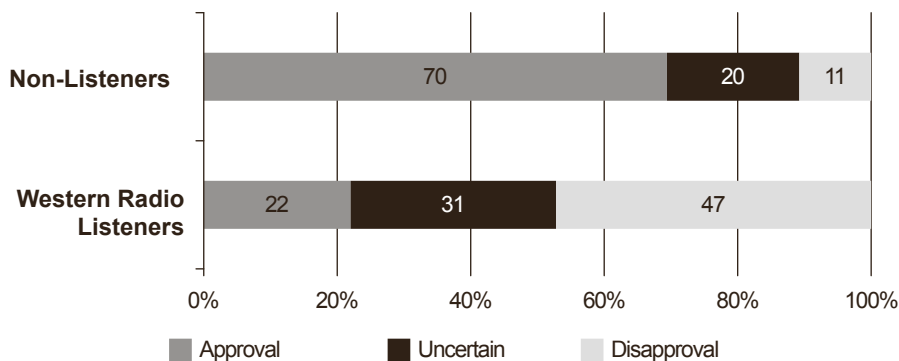


incident they had heard on the broadcasts, while another 30% were uncertain which version to believe. The relatively large percentage of “don’t knows” among the Western radio listeners may stem from the fact that they had been exposed to two conflicting versions of the incident and found it difficult to reach a conclusion. But their readiness to express uncertainty indicated a reluctance to accept the official version in the face of contradictory information.

*Figure 21. Credibility of Media Sources on KAL Incident
Among Listeners and Non-Listeners to Western Radio*



*Figure 22. Attitudes Toward the USSR Action in the KAL Incident
Among Listeners and Non-Listeners to Western Radio*



The attitudes expressed by respondents to the Soviet action are consistent with the version of the incident to which they had been exposed, and which they had found more credible. (See Figure 22).

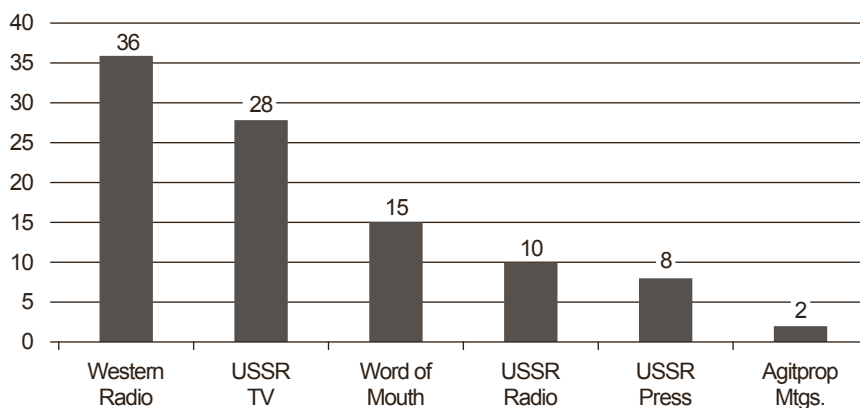
70% of the non-listeners approved the Soviet action in downing the Korean aircraft while only 22% of the Western radio listeners did so. Conversely, almost half the listeners disapproved of the Soviet action and another third were unsure.

While the sample size in this spot survey was relatively small, the dichotomy that emerged between listeners and non-listeners was instructive. Some skepticism of the Soviet version of events may well have existed without Western radio information sources. But it is questionable that an 'alternative opinion' could have been formed. For this, outside information was necessary. It is interesting to note that, in the first week or so after the downing of the aircraft, most respondents showed a good deal of confusion over the matter. At that stage, their natural response was to voice support of their government. Only after enough time had passed to allow the Western radio version of events to be repeated in a consistent manner, while the Soviet version emerged in a halting, and at times contradictory, form, were clear opinion changes noticed.

The Case of the Chernobyl Disaster

In the two months immediately following the Chernobyl disaster on April 26, 1986, SAAOR put queries about the incident to 528 Soviet

Figure 23. First Source of Information on the Chernobyl Disaster



citizens in the course of its regular surveys.²⁷ This study provided an unusually good opportunity to assess the impact of Western radio broadcasts because of the inept manner in which the catastrophe was handled in Soviet media.

Soviet media did not report the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power²⁸ plant on the day it took place, but waited until two days after the disaster occurred. In the ensuing weeks, some information, often contradictory, trickled out from official Soviet sources, but no complete account was given to the Soviet population. (Soviet officials eventually gave a sober account of the accident to a meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency in August 1986.)

In this information vacuum, many Soviet citizens sought out other information sources for an account of what happened. The first source of information on the tragedy among SAAOR respondents was Western radio, indicated by 36% (see Figure 23). This was followed by Soviet TV at 28% and word-of-mouth at 15%.

Even after Soviet media began to report on the accident, Soviet citizens continued to turn to Western radio for further information. An additional 13% used Western radio as a supplementary source after first hearing about the disaster from USSR media, making a total of 49% of

²⁷ Sallie Wise and Patricia Leroy, "The Chernobyl Disaster: Sources of Information and Reactions," AR 4-86, Soviet Area Audience and Opinion Research, RFE/RL, Inc.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.

the survey group to turn to Western radio. VOA was cited most frequently among Western radios as a first source of information on Chernobyl (18%), followed by Radio Liberty at 8% and BBC at 7%. In all, 28% of the respondents had heard information about Chernobyl from VOA, 18% from Radio Liberty and 16% from BBC.

When Soviet media was either slow or reticent in reporting on a major issue, Western radio often filled the gap, as the case of Chernobyl clearly demonstrates.

Some Observations on the Impact of Western Broadcasting to the USSR

An assessment of the overall impact of Western radio in the USSR during the Cold War must remain incomplete, in the absence of conclusive evidence from the Soviet archives, which, given current restrictions on such data, is not apt to be forthcoming in the near future. However, the internal Soviet data cited in Chapter Six by Elena Bashkirova, formerly a researcher at the Institute of Sociology of the USSR Academy of Sciences, corroborates the findings of large audiences to Western broadcasts. There is thus ample empirical evidence to support the view that Western radio broadcasts played an important role in helping to inform the Soviet public, and preparing them to go beyond Marxism-Leninism. Four points in particular stand out:

1. Western radio drew surprisingly large audiences in the USSR during the Cold War;
2. Western broadcasts were clearly important in the eyes of the Soviet regime. The broadcasts were widely attacked in Soviet media, and the regime attempted to discourage listeners by means of jamming and intimidation, even to the extent of laying down criminal penalties for spreading information heard on Western broadcasts;
3. Western broadcasters, by their presence and popularity, played a role in forcing Soviet domestic media to reform and modernize;
4. Information from Western broadcasts played a crucial role in helping to form or reinforce democratic attitudes in the USSR.

Large Cold War Audiences

As this chapter has demonstrated, Western radio had sizeable audiences during the Cold War period, reaching at least 30–40% of the adult population at one time or another. There are few examples of external information sources managing to reach into a modern, industrialized society in such a broad and consistent fashion. The sheer size of the audience to Western broadcasts in the USSR bears witness to the need felt by many members of the Soviet population to go beyond their official domestic media to satisfy their need for information.

Widespread Regime Attacks

Soviet domestic media, especially the press, constantly published articles (which may have numbered well into the thousands) attacking and criticizing Western radio broadcasts. Although these media attacks may have discouraged some people from listening, they may also have had the unintended effect of publicizing Western radio and thereby increasing curiosity in its programming.

Impact of Western Broadcasts on USSR Media

Western radio shattered the information monopoly to which the Soviet regime aspired. There is widespread evidence that the competition posed by Western radios was one of a number of factors that spurred Soviet media to undertake reform on several occasions, to avoid being sidelined as a source of information by their home audience.

Since at least the 1960s, it had been clear to some members of the USSR leadership that Soviet media would have to adapt in order to meet the information challenge posed by Western broadcasters. An article in the official Soviet journal *Kommunist* of July 1965 sounded the alarm:²⁹

“Bourgeois propagandists are trying to use foreign radio, press, tourism, as channels of penetration for alien views in our midst. It would be rash on our part to be satisfied that these channels have not justified all

²⁹ Maury Lisann, *Broadcasting to the Soviet Union: International Politics and Radio* (New York: Praeger, 1975), 36.

the long-range hopes of the anti-Soviet propagandists. It is necessary to study the tactics of enemy propaganda and actively counteract them...”

This was followed by a spate of press articles exhorting Soviet media to improve news coverage and generally make their programs more attractive. The domestic radio station Mayak, founded in 1964, was broadly organized along a Western broadcasting model that combined a new emphasis on news with attractive musical programming, and was seen as a domestic alternative to foreign broadcasts.³⁰ (It was also used to jam these same broadcasts.)

A new media magazine, RT (*Radio i televidenie*) was created in 1966 to rebut information contained in Western radio broadcasts. The *Vremya* TV news program went on the air on January 1, 1968 with a new, modern approach to news and current events. The ability of Soviet citizens to find alternative sources of information unquestionably put pressure on Soviet media to improve their performance with regard to the quality and timeliness of the information provided, and the format in which it was presented.

The impetus to improve and adapt Soviet media to compete more effectively with foreign broadcasts continued into the *glasnost* period. In 1987, major innovations were made in Soviet television³¹. Programming became more timely, interesting and attractive. By bringing television news and information up to the level of Western radio broadcasts (now widely available to Soviet citizens, since most were no longer jammed), the regime clearly hoped to make domestic television a more valuable tool in the service of the state.

Influence of Western Broadcasts on Attitude and Opinion Formation

The examples of Afghanistan, the Korean airliner incident, and Chernobyl given above, as well as numerous other attitudinal studies carried out by SAAOR, consistently showed a high positive correlation between Western

³⁰ A. Rapokhin, “Radio, Man and His World,” in *Sovetskoye radio i televideniye*, May 1958, cited by Lisann, op.cit., 33.

³¹ Mark Rhodes, “Soviet TV Innovations Aimed at Reducing Western Radio Audiences,” “RM 1-87, Soviet Area Audience and Opinion Research, RFE/RL, Inc., April 1987.

radio listening and attitudes and opinions that deviated from the official line in the USSR. High positive correlations, however, are not proof of causality.

Obviously, the process of opinion formation does not depend on any one single factor. It is entirely possible that, during the pre-*glasnost* period, Western broadcasts did little more than reinforce already existing critical positions among the approximately one in eight Soviet urban adults who were highly critical of the Soviet system, and whom we have typified as “liberals.” Nevertheless, the broadcasts served as an informational lifeline which ensured that the existing critical standpoint could be nourished and consolidated.

For the 30% of the urban adult population who were characterized in the attitudinal typology as “moderates,” Western radio provided alternative and supplementary information without which a critical thought process might have been inconceivable. It was when the “moderates” and the “liberals” found common ground in the *perestroika* period that change became possible.

Although Western radio was in communication with the more critically-thinking elements in Soviet society, its audience was not limited to these groups. It was widely heard among the elites of Soviet society, including members of the CPSU, who listened at approximately the same rates as non-members. They tuned in not only to “know the adversary,” but also to obtain the information they needed to function effectively in leadership roles in their own society. Over time, their understanding of the events and processes at work in the USSR was inevitably colored by the information and analysis they received from Western broadcasts.

Although Western radio was less effective in reaching the politically apathetic, the less-educated Party members, and ideological hardliners, these groups were never part of the audiences the radios were aiming for, which was, broadly speaking, the urban intelligentsia. None of these groups, moreover, played a significant role in the transformational process of the late *perestroika* period.

Conclusions

Western broadcasters did not have a blueprint for the democratic development of the Soviet Union but, by keeping hope of change alive, and by maintaining a dialogue with those elements of the population that were

working for, or at least open to, change, they made an essential contribution to the eventual transformation of the USSR.

International radio communication alone cannot bring about basic changes in a society, though it is difficult to imagine that a freer and more pluralistic society could have evolved in the Soviet Union without the contribution of Western radios. But the broadcasts were a means, not an end. They were a channel of information that reported the news, but they did not make the news. They helped to keep the flame of hope alive, but there had to be a vessel to contain that flame.

That vessel was the large audience that was receptive to these broadcasts, to the factual information they provided and the implicit message of hope they contained. This was a committed audience that strained to listen through jamming or found ingenious methods to circumvent it. The Soviet peoples themselves, in association with a sometime enlightened leadership, saw the necessity for change and transformation, and eventually made it possible to put an end to the Cold War and begin a new chapter in their lives. Western radio played an indispensable part in the process, but in the end real change came from within, not from without.

In an empirical study based upon available quantitative data, it is easy to forget that there is a real human being with his or her personal story behind each number. The rather straightforward presentation of statistics and correlations in this chapter does not do justice to the emotions that listeners expressed in thousands of letters to the stations over the years, or in off-the-cuff comments they made during interviews. That would be a worthwhile topic for another study. Here is one example: In a letter to Radio Liberty in 1989, an institute director in Kiev expressed what Western radio meant to her, and to many like her:

“In my opinion, and I speak for a circle of Ukrainian intellectuals in Kiev, we feel that all the changes taking place in the USSR today are in great part due to Western radio broadcasting the truth. Especially Radio Liberty because it devotes so much time to events in the USSR. If the radio stopped broadcasting, we would feel betrayed [...] it would be a disaster.”

CHAPTER 6

The Foreign Radio Audience in the USSR During the Cold War: An Internal Perspective

ELENA I. BASHKIROVA

The attempt to influence populations through broadcasting in national languages was just one episode of the so-called Cold War between the USSR and the West, especially the United States. In 1947 the Voice of America started broadcasting to the USSR; Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty joined the pool in 1950 and 1953 respectively; BBC, Vatican Radio, Deutsche Welle and other radio stations also began broadcasting in Russian. Since the Soviet authorities had placed ideological and other limitations on information, the programs of Western radio stations helped the local audience to learn about viewpoints which differed from the official Soviet point of view. It is clear that Western radio programs were extremely attractive to a significant part of Soviet society.

It is important to note that the USSR ideological services tried to control not only the public and political spheres, but also cultural life. Many authors and performers, and even entire cultural trends, were declared “ideologically hostile” and banned in the USSR. It was left to Western radio stations to acquaint the Soviet audience with banned music and literature. As a result, people’s interest in programs broadcast from abroad gradually increased.

Even today, Russian and foreign social scientists continue to discuss the role that the programs broadcast from abroad played in Soviet public and political life during the periods of stagnation and *perestroika*. Some scholars and politicians consider their role to have been extremely significant, while others play down the importance of foreign broadcasting. This is not merely of historical interest, for since the sources of many current political processes in Russia lie in our past, the discussion remains socially relevant. Sociological studies, conducted by the Institute of Sociology of the USSR Academy of Sciences in various Soviet cities and towns from the 1960s to the 1980s, help to understand the size of the audience

to Western radio stations, and the extent of their influence on public and political events. This chapter will analyze some of these findings.

The audience to foreign radio stations was the object of serious study by both Soviet and Western social scientists. The latter needed detailed studies of the Soviet audience in order to understand the impact of broadcasts in the USSR, while the USSR ideological services were interested in getting information about listeners to foreign radio stations to help them undertake appropriate counterpropaganda measures.

Obviously, the level and character of those studies were different. The Western scientists did not have the opportunity to implement their projects directly in the USSR. As a result, they had to apply indirect methods (analysis of Russian emigrants to Western countries, analysis of Soviet counterpropaganda activity, study of local mass media, interviews with Soviet citizens traveling abroad). Soviet sociologists had a different problem: they had great difficulty in obtaining answers from their respondents, because listening to foreign radio stations in the USSR was considered a form of anti-Soviet activity.

Direct contacts between Soviet and Western social scientists were almost impossible during that time. However, each side actively studied the published results of studies conducted by the other. Soviet authors often cited Western social scientists such as F.K. Barlett, B. Berelson, N. Bone, A.C. Brown, G. Gode, L. Doob, P. Davison, D. Ingure, D. Katz, G. Kelly, G. Clepper, P. Lazarsfeld, P.N. Linebarger, R. White, R. Hilbert, D. Heloran, K. Hovlaid, G.L. Chids, and W. Schramm in their publications.

In early studies conducted by Russian scientists such as A.G. Zdravomyslov, R. Karevyae, V.D. Tokarev and G.I. Khmara, the influence of Western broadcasting on the Soviet audience did not merit a separate analysis. Initially, it was only one issue among many pertaining to the overall impact of Soviet mass media on the audience. Studies were restricted to only a few tasks: to find out the number of Western radio stations, to determine which ones attracted an audience, and to note the frequency of listening to their programs. Only in the works of researchers such as V.L. Artemov, P.S. Gurevich and V.S. Komarovsky did the audience for Western radios become a subject of special sociological study.

The research work conducted by V.L. Artemov and P.S. Gurevich showed that the study of Western radio audiences in the USSR required new methodical approaches and solutions to multiple organizational problems, such as ensuring sincere responses and guaranteeing respondent anonymity. Some of these organizational and methodological problems

were solved in studies conducted by the researchers of the Mass Media Department of the Research Institute of Sociology of the USSR Academy of Sciences, under the leadership of Professor Komarovsky. The researchers developed new methodological approaches to the study of the Western radio stations' audience in the USSR, and worked out organizational principles and methods for conducting the studies. The gathering of reliable and trustworthy information was one of the main objectives. The number of factors and characteristics under study also increased significantly. The research work involved analysis of audience size and frequency of listening to foreign broadcasts, as well as the motives, thematic program interests, and overall attitudes to Western radio stations.

Later Soviet researchers developed an even deeper approach to the problem of studying the Western broadcasting audience in the USSR; they worked out several interesting methodological approaches to the problem.

As a rule, the studies were conducted with a representative urban sample. As far as we know, a nationally representative sample was never studied. The urban sample was preferred because researchers were interested in foreign broadcasting audiences in specific cities under study. Moreover, researchers did not want to attract public attention, as generally happened in the case of a nation-wide study. The Soviet researchers hypothesized that the audience to Western radio stations in the Soviet provinces was too small to present any special interest for the studies. (However, this did not apply to all regions, as we see below.) The surveys were conducted in all the cities sampled using similar methods based on a proportional quota sample. As a rule, the quotas were differentiated by social and demographic characteristics. Usually, six categories of the working and student adult population were chosen. These were workers, civil servants, intelligentsia not directly engaged in the production process (i.e. engineers, scientists, teachers, etc.), college students, secondary and technical school students. In this way, the Soviet researchers managed to obtain sociologically valid data about the Soviet urban audience to Western radio stations.

Methodology Used by Soviet Researchers

As we have noted, the Soviet researchers created their own methodological concept to study the Western radio audience. The thesis of the primary importance of *social factors* on audience behavior was the basis for

the new methodology. "Social importance" was determined by the social characteristics (education, sphere of occupation, political activity, etc.) of the individual. Soviet scientists always strongly related personal activity to the social status and public functions performed by an individual in society. There is no doubt that, in the first instance, personal activity depended on the character of the social and economic structure of the state.

The Soviet approach differed from the methodology used by Western social scientists, who found personal psychological factors much more important. In the Western perception, the audience was seen as an object for propagandistic manipulation. Audience functions were limited to reception, perception and blind belief (without critical analysis) in the information communicated. F.K. Barlett expressed the idea most succinctly: "Propaganda should influence peoples' minds so that they would accept the imposed opinions and behavior samples without looking for the reasons which make them change their outlook."¹

When studying the impact of mass media on the audience, most Western researchers based their opinions on the "univariate and unidirectional character of mass communication; they considered the so-called one-step communication model."² According to this concept, mass communication turned into a one-sided process of information flowing from communicator to recipient without taking any mediating factors into consideration. The communication message was a stimulus for direct influence on the individual behavior. The behaviorist model "stimulus-reaction" was used to study the influence effect. Later, H. Lasswell specified the model³ which was used as the basis for all studies of the impact of mass media on audiences for quite a long time.

However, Soviet researchers also used Western methodology in their studies of Western broadcasting impact. For example, the Likert pooled estimate scale was applied to analyze the communicative effect of Western radio on the Soviet audience. Some other methods were used as well.

As a rule, the Soviet audience to Western radio stations was the object of multiple studies. All radio stations were considered as a unified system of channels broadcasting to the Soviet audience from a unified

¹ F.K. Barlett, "The Aims of Political Propaganda," in *Public Opinion and Propaganda*, New York, (1954), 464.

² P. Lazarsfeld, B. Berelson, H. Gaudet, *The People's Choice: How the Voter Makes up His Mind in a Presidential Campaign* (New York, 1948).

³ A popular model was "Who?—What?—What channel?—What is the effect?"

center. In the opinion of Soviet researchers, the audience to mass media was a community of people, not individuals. The audience to mass media was segmented into *real* and *potential* parts, as well as regular (active) and irregular (passive) groups.

Potential audience was that part of the population of a country or region which could become a recipient of information provided through a certain channel, but for various reasons was not currently involved in the mass media system.

Real audience was that part of the population of a country or region which actually used the mass media channels.

Frequency of use of mass media channels (number of days per week, per month) and time spent on a specific channel (minutes, hours per day, per week) made up the basis for segmentation into *regular* (active) and *irregular* parts of the audience.

The characteristics of the audience were the main object of study. Those characteristics were: mass character, intensity of contact with Western broadcasts, thematic program interests, motives for listening, satisfaction level, and trust in the broadcast information.

Audience mass character (overall audience size) indicated the number of people using a mass media channel; that was one of the main audience characteristics.

Intensity of contacts. The main intensity indicators were frequency of listening to the radio stations of capitalist countries; time spent listening to the broadcast programs, average daily size of audience, and size of regular and irregular audience groups. The frequency of listening to Western radio stations meant the number of days per week a respondent listened to the radio stations. Time spent listening to broadcast programs was indicated by minutes and hours of listening to the broadcasts during a day.

Interest has always been a strong regulator of human behavior, including communication behavior. It relates directly to the processes of information acceptance, assimilation and generation, the factors which stimulate an individual in the search for new information. The audience perceives and integrates the information in a selective manner. The character of selectivity is common to all parts and groups of the audience. However, it has peculiarities specific to the individual. These peculiarities are formed under the pressure of life conditions, perceptions, energy levels, etc. The combination of objective and subjective factors makes up a social and psychological phenomenon, which reflects the wishes, require-

ments and capabilities of the audience members in an integrated form. Interest means that an individual starts to understand the personal value of mass media output. The audience interest finds its expression in a choice of specific radio stations, themes, genres, programs and messages. There are two factors defining audience interest: individual vital interests and personal situation. Audience interest is therefore nothing but the specific expression of a certain aim mediating the relationship between the motive and the object of interest.

Motive is a special form revealing an individual's requirements. It always means "a certain object, which makes the requirements concrete." As a result, the activity is aimed at this object and a person feels induced to achieve it. The motives are formed into direct and concrete inner inducements perceived by people as objective requirements and interests.

Satisfaction tends to indicate audience predisposition to further contacts with Western broadcasting and readiness to accept the information. Satisfaction occurs in the process of communication and testifies to the communicative impact efficiency. Audience satisfaction with the radio programs characterizes the audience's overall attitude to the broadcast information, the specific radio station, its staff members preparing the programs, and the ideas they spread among the listeners. Satisfaction is a wide and multi-dimensional concept: for example, a person can be satisfied with timely delivery of information and dissatisfied with the format of information delivery. Level of satisfaction is a complex factor depending on satisfaction with various aspects of the activity of Western radio stations, such as program format and contents, work of staff members in preparing materials, etc.

The factor of trust in the information broadcast by the stations is one of the most important indicators showing the audience's attitude to the information and its sources. Level of trust can have an impact on values, standards and points of view. Gaining the audience's trust is one of the main aims of Western mass media activity. For many years, the audience's level of trust in a station has been considered a major effectiveness indicator. Trust means the listener is convinced of the true character of certain ideas and perceptions, reality of concepts, images, events, and relationships. (Of course, conviction can be true or false, depending on whether the facts upon which it is based are known and reliable, or not.) Measurement of the audience's trust in Western radio created serious complications for the work of Soviet researchers. The issue of trust had a kind of psychological aspect, which could not be observed. Nor was it

easy for Soviet respondents to freely indicate that they trusted information broadcast by sources officially denounced by the USSR authorities. Therefore, in many cases respondents' answers were insincere.

Characteristics of the Soviet Audience to Western Radio Stations

Size of Audience. As mentioned before, the influence of Western radio stations on Soviet society was always a subject of interest for the ideological services of the Soviet state. These services also tried to study the problem.

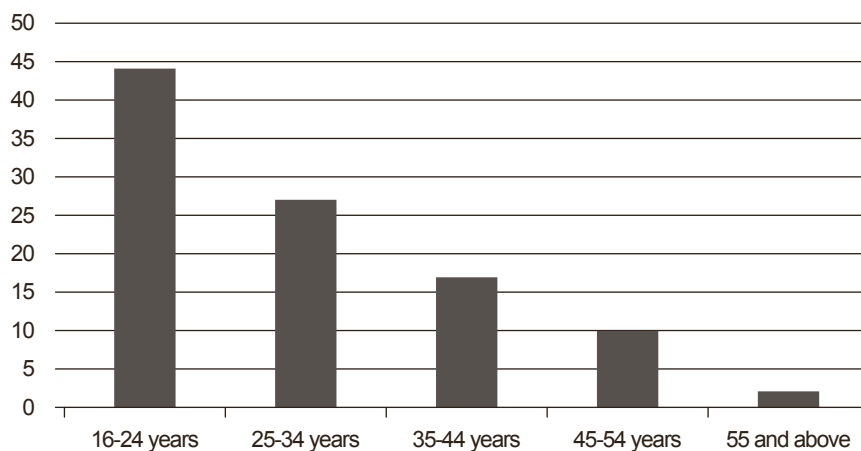
The first studies, conducted in the 1960s, led Soviet social scientists to conclude that Western radio broadcasting to the USSR was ineffective, since the audience measured was small. In the opinion of A.G. Zdravomyslov, "The foreign broadcasting and the press don't make up any serious source of information and there is not any need to beware of bourgeois ideology being spread through the radio channels."

However, in the 1970s, the audience to foreign radio stations increased significantly and Soviet social scientists feared it could cause serious changes to the information situation in the country. Study results showed that by the end of the 1970s more than half of the USSR urban population listened to foreign broadcasting more or less regularly. It was sufficient for a respondent to indicate that he/she listened to at least one Western radio station of any kind. At that period, the scientists did not deal with the importance of individual stations nor with the intensity of respondents' listening to the programs.

Analysis of social and demographic characteristics revealed several specificities of the Western radio audience. Overall, the audience's social and professional composition matched the general population; gender distribution was also approximately equal. But with age and level of education, some serious differences were noted between the general population and the audience to Western radios. Thus, respondents having secondary and higher educational levels composed about 70% of the total Western radio audience. The share of younger adults was higher as well (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 shows that young adults aged up to 24 made up a significant part of the Western radio stations' audience. The data obtained by Soviet scientists showed that all main categories of the urban population listened

Figure 1. Audience distribution according to age
(% of the total number of listeners).



Source: The results of studies conducted in six cities of the USSR using a proportional quota sample for each city. Total sample = 6365 respondents. Western radio audience = 3300 respondents.

to Western radio programs, thus defining the audience as of mass character. Studies of dynamic growth of the audience to foreign stations in the USSR showed a definite increase between 1970 and 1980. According to Soviet scientists' estimates, audience growth stabilized and dropped somewhat in the early 1980s.

Frequency of Listening. Most respondents listened to Western radio programs irregularly, or less than once a week. Soviet researchers segmented the audience into four equal groups, depending on frequency of listening:

Males and females were represented equally in a group of people listening to the programs *three-four times a week or more*. Most of them had either incomplete secondary education (eight classes of school) or complete general secondary and special secondary education. The number of people with incomplete and complete higher education was a bit lower and, finally, only a few respondents had seven classes of education and even less. The group was strongly differentiated by age. Most of the group members were younger adults and the number of people aged 16–19 was especially high.

The second group included the audience listening to Western radio *once or twice a week*. The proportion of females in the group was a bit higher than that of male listeners. The age differentiation in the group

remained the same. As for social and professional profile, workers made up the most significant group of listeners, to be followed by students and “intelligentsia.”

Overall, it should be noted that the first two groups had a similar social and demographic composition. They could be combined into one group called the *regular audience to Western radio*.

A somewhat higher number of males listened to Western broadcasts *less than once a week, but more than once a month*. Differentiation by age and education was the same as in the previous two groups. Distribution by social and professional parameters was even more uniform than in the first two groups. An exception could be made for workers who listened to the radio less than once a week. The number of those listeners was significantly higher than listeners in other categories.

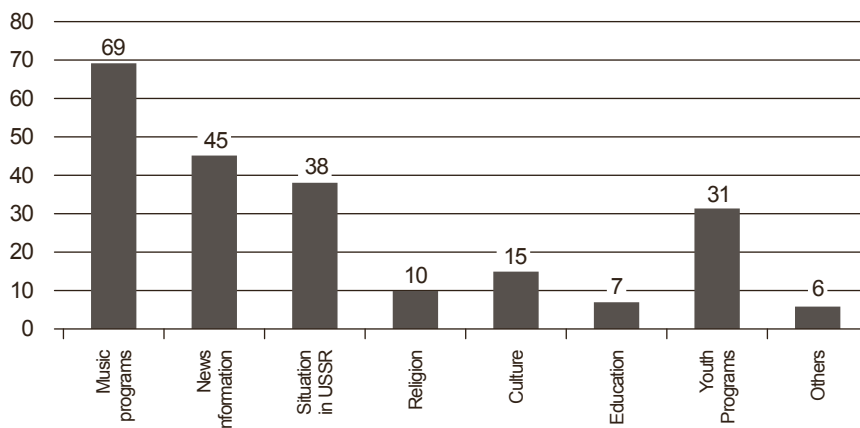
The fourth group was made up of people who listened to Western radio *less than once a month*. The social and demographic parameters distributed evenly in this group. Overall, the group was noteworthy concerning their motives for listening to Western radio, while the social and demographic parameters were of minor importance. Their motives differed from the motives of people who listened to Western radio programs regularly and less frequently than once a week but more than once a month. The data obtained during the studies showed that a significant part of this fourth group (43%) listened to the Western radio accidentally, with no specific objectives. As was the case with other groups, but to a lesser extent, such people were driven by a search for entertainment, while the motive for getting new information remained extremely low.

Overall, each of the four groups differed from the others and had several specific characteristics. At the same time, all groups had some common features, which united the groups into pairs and helped to form two different totalities—*regular and irregular audiences*.

The results obtained by the Soviet social scientists during their studies showed that the *regular group* made up approximately 27 % of the total number of respondents in the cities under survey. The *irregular group* was about 35 % of the surveyed urban population. The researchers noted that the size of the *irregular group* decreased gradually with time, because some started to listen to Western radio on a regular basis and others stopped listening to it at all.

Availability of modern shortwave radio sets helped the Soviet radio audience to choose among different radio stations. The results showed

Figure 2. Audience distribution according to thematic interests
(% of the total Western radio audience).



Source: The results of studies conducted in 6 cities of the USSR using a proportional quota sample. Total sample = 6365 respondents. Western radio audience = 3300 respondents.

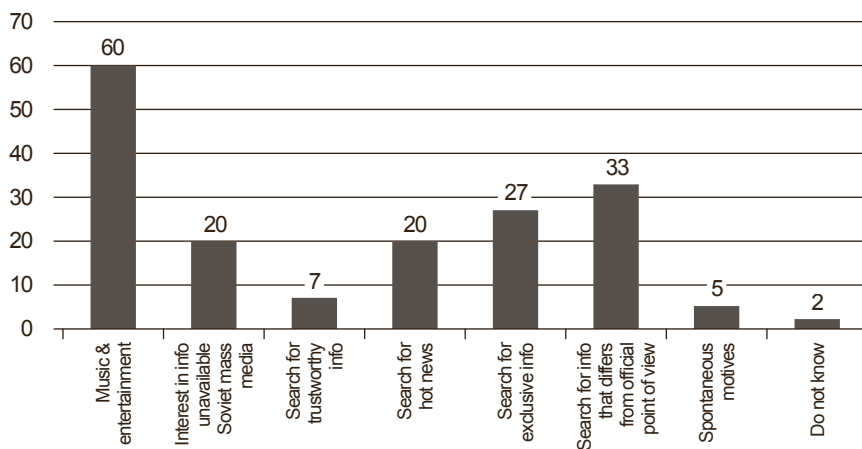
that the Voice of America was the most popular radio station with the Soviet audience during this period. This popularity derived from relatively easy access to VOA's programs (it was not jammed during these years), and from a high amount of broadcasting, which was able to attract wide circles of the Soviet audience. Additionally, the Voice of America was the first radio station directly broadcasting to the Soviet audience. Even the name widely used by the Soviets testified to its popularity—foreign broadcasting was called “Western Voice” or “Hostile Voice.”

Content. Audience distribution by subject matter showed that people were interested in almost all themes and subjects carried in the Western radio programs, although information, music and entertainment programs were the most popular (see Figure 2).

Audience interest in the information programs of Western radio was high, because the listeners could get information about international events which were not covered by the Soviet mass media. Figure 2 shows that about two-thirds of the Soviet radio listeners liked the music programs. Unlike Soviet radio stations, Western radio widely broadcast music and songs that were especially popular with the youth audience.

Motives for listening. Studies conducted by Soviet social scientists showed that listening to Western radio was seriously motivated. This was

Figure 3. Audience distribution according to different motives
(% of listeners)



Source: The results of studies conducted in 6 cities of the USSR using a proportional quota sample. Total sample = 6365 respondents. Western radio audience = 3300 respondents.

true of both the regular and irregular audience. The main motives for listening to Western radio stations are shown in Figure 3.

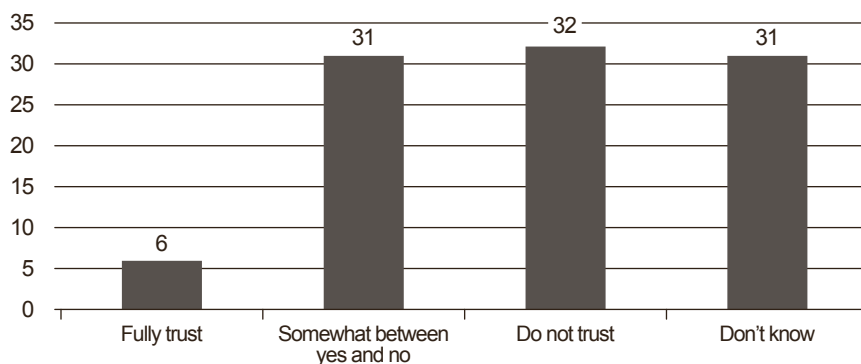
Figure 3 shows that the main motives for listening to Western radio stations were interest in music and entertainment, and informational factors. The audience also listened to foreign radio programs in search of timely “hot” information, and for opinions which differed from the official Soviet ones.

Level of Trust. In many respects, the Soviet social scientists were suspicious about the finding that the Western broadcasting was so popular with the Soviet population, which found it both trustworthy and reliable. The level of trust in foreign radio stations is shown on Figure 4.

Overall, the level of trust in the information broadcast by Western radio was high, especially when one considers that the above figure includes non-listeners as well as listeners. Soviet researchers noted that the level of trust in Western radio information was high even with people who did not listen to the stations.

We may compare the level of trust in Western radio during these Cold War years with the level of trust in modern Russian mass media, using data from current studies. For example, data culled by ROMIR-Monitoring (n=1500, All-Russia survey, 2003) show that about 50% of the respondents trust the Russian mass media “to some extent.” This means

Figure 4. Distribution of respondents according to level of trust in the information provided by the Western radio stations (% of the total number of respondents).



Source: The results of studies conducted in 6 cities of the USSR using a proportional quota sample. Total sample = 6365 respondents. Western radio audience = 3300 respondents.

that, even by comparison with the current situation in Russia, the level of trust in Western radio stations during the Cold War can be called high.

Regional and National Aspects. As stated above, Soviet social scientists did not conduct nationally representative sample studies of the foreign broadcasting audience. However, they did examine several different regions to determine how foreign radio was perceived on the basis of regional data. The results of several studies indicated that, in the regions close to the state borders of the USSR, the interest in Western radio programs was somewhat higher than in the central parts of the country. The Baltic Republics, the Western Ukraine, and the Caucasian Republics of the former USSR are especially noteworthy in this connection. In the opinion of the Soviet sociologists, such a high interest in Western radio stations could be explained by two major factors: (1) the greater accessibility of Western broadcasting in these border regions, (2) special programs were directed at the people living in these border regions: both religious broadcasts, and a wide range of nationality-language broadcasts. It is noteworthy that the level of loyalty of the population of these border regions was somewhat lower than in the other regions of the USSR. This became apparent a bit later, in the 1980s, when the Baltic republics were the first to declare their intention to become independent of the USSR.

Soviet and Foreign Data

Let us compare the data obtained by Soviet social scientists with the results of studies conducted in other countries to attempt to evaluate the Soviet audience to Western radio stations.⁴ The Western estimates below are from the early 1970s and are taken from published sources. About 40–60 million people listened to Western radio programs with varying degrees of frequency. The Voice of America attracted most listeners (about one third of the whole audience). From 50% to 75% of the various population groups revealed interest in public issues, especially world news highlighted by the Western radio stations. From 30% to 50% of the USSR population considered the work of Soviet mass media dissatisfying. From 20% to 30% of the population had serious doubts about the trustworthiness of information broadcast by Soviet mass media.

We can see that in many respects the above data are consistent with the data obtained by the Soviet sociologists. At the same time, there are important differences between the data obtained from internal and external sources. For example, the Soviet researchers estimated the size of the audiences to Western radio in the USSR as significantly higher than their Western counterparts. Soviet scientists also stated that one of the main motives for listening to foreign radio stations was music and entertainment, and not just a desire to hear the latest news.

The above differences apparently stem from different methodological approaches. The Soviet researchers were in the fortunate position of being able to study foreign radio audiences directly in the USSR, while their foreign colleagues had to use indirect or inferential methods in these early studies. As a result, they missed a significant group of listeners who turned to Western radio in search of popular and trendy music and entertainment. Of course, Western researchers were mainly interested in the social and political category of the radio audience, which attracted most of their attention.

⁴ G. Hollander, *Soviet Political Indoctrination*, (New York, 1972); M. Lisann, *Broadcasting to the Soviet Union* (New York, 1975); P. Hollander, *Soviet and American Society: A Comparison* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1978). (Chapter Six of Lisann's book was extrapolated from a USIA estimate and some fragmentary Soviet sources, and also used some early RL traveler survey data in arriving at audience estimates—Eds.)

The Current Western Radio Audience

The results of studies conducted by ROMIR by the end of the 1990s showed that the size of the Western radio audience had decreased significantly from its Cold War levels. These changes were caused by the intensive development of local mass media during a period when freedom of speech was established in Russia. However, the total size of the overall radio audience decreased seriously in Russia as well. As a result, we see in Russia today that the role of radio has been diminished by other mass media, such as television (including digital and satellite TV) and global computer networks (Internet).

Foreign Radio and Internet

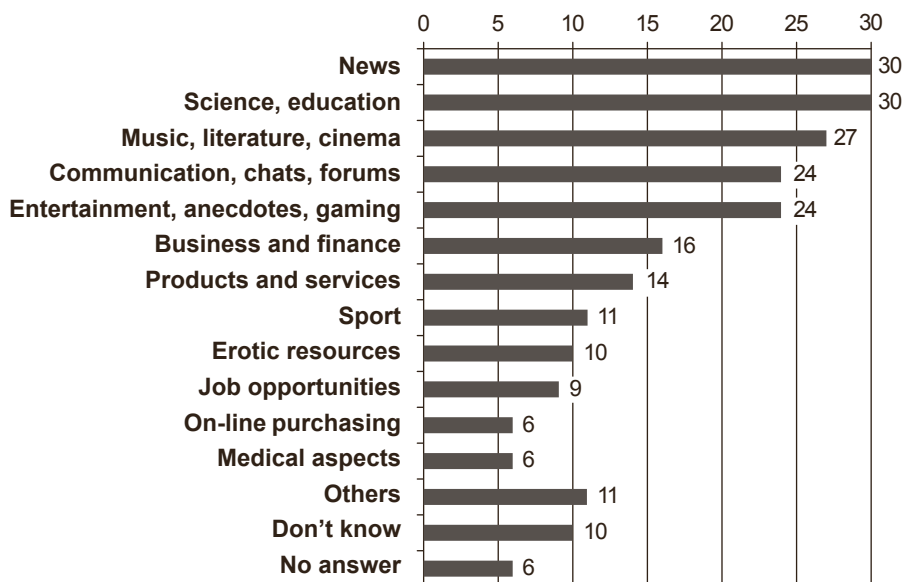
The study of the Russian Internet audience is an important activity of ROMIR-Monitoring. The results of studies conducted by this company help to draw a portrait of current Russian Internet users. The data analysis shows some similar features between the current Russian Internet users and the audience to foreign radio stations of the 1970–1980s. Rapid development of the technological infrastructure in urban regions means that most Russian Internet users live in cities, mainly Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Novosibirsk, etc. Most Russian Internet users are young adults aged from 18 to 25. (It is noteworthy that 25 years ago most of the Western radio audience was made up of listeners of the same age.)

Figure 5 shows what Russian Internet users seek out.

Figure 5 shows that in many ways the interests of Russian Internet users match the interests of the former Soviet audience to Western radio (see Figure 2). As was the case 25 years earlier, the audience today is also mainly interested in timely information and, to a somewhat lesser extent, entertainment and music.

We cannot of course state that these two groups, current Internet users and the audience to Western radio during the Cold War, are identical, but some common features are clearly seen nevertheless. The common denominator is the keen desire of certain groups in the population to receive timely and independent information.

Figure 5. What interests you most on Internet? (% of respondents)



Source: Study of 1500 respondents in Russia in 2002

Conclusion

The analysis of the above-mentioned sociological data leads us to the following conclusions:

1. The size of Western radio stations audience grew gradually from the beginning of broadcasting in the early post-war period to reach more than 50% of the Soviet urban population in the early 1980s.
2. In other words, Western radio stations had a mass audience in the former USSR. The number of regular listeners was as high as 20–25%.
3. According to social and demographic parameters, the audience members were representative of the Soviet urban population. Most of them (44%) were young adults aged up to 30 and with a post-secondary educational level.
4. Interest in music programs was one of the major stimuli to listen to a Western radio station. Moreover, many listeners started with the mu-

sic and entertainment programs and then shifted to the social and political programs.

5. The level of Soviet audience trust in Western radio stations was relatively high (30–35%).
6. The most attractive features of Western broadcasting to the former USSR were:
 - a) More timely delivery of many kinds of information than Soviet mass media.
 - b) Information about events that Soviet mass media did not cover but which were of great interest to Soviet society.
 - c) A point of view on many events that differed from the official Soviet view.
7. Despite a relatively high level of trust in Western radio stations, most listeners did not totally accept all the information they heard. The Soviet audience took a more deliberate approach to understanding information that was based on a comparison of information obtained from Soviet mass media with that from foreign radio programs.
8. A lessening of audience interest in Western broadcasting on major social and political change got underway in the last years of the USSR, and has continued in Russia. This is due to dramatic changes in local mass media. The development of new and independent Russian mass media provided the Russian audience with timely and extensive information reflecting a variety of attitudes and different points of view, thus making Western broadcasting less important. Development of electronic mass media and Internet, in particular, has also played a role in decreasing the importance of Western radio broadcasting.
9. A certain similarity can be noted between the current Russian Internet audience and the Soviet Cold War audience to Western radio stations. Most likely the reason is that the Internet, which is now the most effective and innovative mass media in Russia, functionally resembles the Western radio stations, which used to be effective sources of timely and up-to-date information for many Soviet listeners during the 1970s and 1980s.

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CHAPTER 7

The Audience to Western Broadcasts to Poland During the Cold War

LECHOSŁAW GAWLIKOWSKI
(with YVETTE NEISSER MORENO)

The purpose of this paper is to examine the audience to Radio Free Europe's Polish Service from the 1960s to the early 1990s. The paper includes and compares data from three sources: external surveys with travelers conducted by RFE's audience research department; restricted internal surveys conducted by the audience research department of Polish Radio (government-sponsored research) that have become available since the end of the Communist period; and surveys of military personnel and draftees conducted by researchers with the Military Political Academy in Warsaw.¹

OBOP. The Center for Public Opinion Research in Warsaw (Polish abbreviation OBOP), attached to Polish Radio, was the first public opinion research institution in Poland, and the only research organization in the Communist bloc in the early post-war years. Because sociological research was banned during the Stalinist period, Polish scholars became very interested in the development of public opinion research worldwide, especially in the United States, when the Stalinist period waned. After 1956, there was much greater freedom to conduct scientific research. For many years, OBOP was the only institution in Poland that conducted scientific audience research among listeners to RFE's Polish programs.

OBOP archive documents now available indicate that audience research aimed at determining the number of listeners to Western radio programs in Poland was not initiated until 1969, although audience research

¹ RFE's overall reach in Poland varied, depending on current events and the political situation at different periods of time. The following timeline gives an overview of pertinent events that will be referred to in this chapter: Gomułka tenure: 1956–1970; Student unrest: 1968; Workers' riots: 1969–70; Gierek tenure: 1970–1980; Social crisis: Aug.–Nov. 1980; Martial law: Dec. 1981–1988.

into domestic radio listening had started in the late 1950s. The OBOP data in this paper come from the institution's existing source documents for the years 1969 to 1992.

However, since OBOP produced reports only for the internal use of the leadership of the Party, government and propaganda apparatus, and since the research methodology was not consistent from year to year, not all of the data are reliable. For example, prior to 1975, the sampling method was not clearly defined. From 1976 to 1979, the data were somewhat reliable, though probably not accurate, since many survey respondents may have feared admitting that they listened to RFE. Hence, the reliability of the OBOP surveys on RFE's listenership and audience was highest between August 1980, when Poland's social crisis began and there was a turn-over in staff at the Center, and 1982, when the effects of martial law began to impact the research and its analysis. This was the period when the researchers had the greatest freedom to conduct and interpret their surveys. Since the report on 1980 has not been preserved, the 1981 and 1982 surveys produced the most interesting results, including data on the structure of RFE's audience and on listeners' assessments of RFE's reliability.

However, after 1982, OBOP introduced changes, either in the surveying method (never officially admitted), or in the interpretation of survey results, or both, which led to excessively low results for RFE listenership, not only by RFE standards but also by internal OBOP standards. Thus, the OBOP data from 1983 onward are not valid, with one possible exception: In March 1989, OBOP was commissioned by the BBC to conduct a survey of Western radio listenership in Poland. The results of this survey, according to OBOP documents, indicated much higher—and hence, probably more accurate—listening rates than OBOP's own surveys in the late 1980s.

EEAOR. RFE's Department of East European Audience and Opinion Research (EEAOR, after 1976 part of the combined RFE/RL organization)², operating under conditions of inaccessible populations (in terms of classical sampling procedures) in Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland and Romania, applied and refined the method of Comparative and Continuous Sampling. The method derives from the prin-

² Until 1981, this department was called the "Department of Audience and Public Opinion Research" (APOR); however, for the sake of consistency, it will be referred to as EEAOR throughout this chapter.

ciple of repeated samples used, for example, in the biological sciences. The basis for the samplings was the large number of people who, during the Communist period, traveled from Eastern Europe to West European countries, where local opinion research institutes drew samples from these various nationalities and interviewed them with the help of a uniform questionnaire designed by EEAOR.

The method stipulated that analysis of the national sample could be undertaken only if the findings based on the independent samples obtained by different institutes were so similar that rigorous tests could not establish statistically significant differences. In other words, not one but five Polish samples—in Austria, Belgium, England, France, and Germany—were taken in the course of an eleven-month-long survey. By replicating the samples over an extended period of time in different areas and using different institutes, chance fluctuations and findings, interviewing and environmental biases, and other error-producing factors could be identified when they did occur.

The institutes that conducted the field work for RFE were enjoined to apply, as far as possible, quota sampling in terms of the known demographic parameters of the East European adult populations investigated. Because East Europeans traveling to Western countries provided a relatively fair cross section of their respective national populations, those quota requirements could be more or less met, which in turn allowed ex-post-facto adjustments of the aggregate final sample (weighting) to remain on a relatively small scale.

The method of Comparative and Continual Sampling was first developed in 1946 to measure the audience of RIAS in Berlin, but it only began to provide accurate and reliable results for RFE when the number of visitors traveling to Western Europe from Poland and other countries of Eastern Europe was large enough, and when the number of refugees included in the national samples fell to below 10% of the total sample size and eventually was fully eliminated (in 1968). In the Polish case, reliable results were produced starting in 1962/63.³ All surveys used for measurement purposes used travelers from Eastern Europe who were temporarily in the West. No interviews with defectors or émigrés from Eastern Europe were included.

³ As mentioned above, the EEAOR surveys were conducted over the course of several months with different groups of travelers, and thus often spanned two calendar years.

WAP. While the documentation preserved in OBOP's archives would indicate that no research was conducted on the radio listening habits of military personnel, it is known that the Social Research Institute of the Military Political Academy (Polish abbreviation WAP) did such research. Although the results are still considered "secret" by the post-Communist Polish government and are not yet accessible for research, some of the data were presented in the Masters thesis of a former WAP student⁴, and this document is located at Poland's Institute for National Remembrance.

WAP investigated RFE, VOA and BBC listenership among professional officers and non-commissioned officers as well as drafted soldiers. Statistical data are available only for the years 1979, 1981 and 1983. Nonetheless, these data provide an invaluable source of comparison with the OBOP and EEAOR data.

Overall Reach of RFE in Poland

OBOP Data. From references in the Polish official press, book publications, and programs on Polish Radio, we know that OBOP conducted some research on the audiences of RFE and other Western stations broadcasting to Poland before 1969. However, the results of this research in the OBOP archives (including the archives of Polish Radio, Polish TV and the Institute of National Remembrance) are nonexistent. Nonetheless, an EEAOR memorandum relating data from 1956 cites a figure of 80% Western radio listenership from Polish Radio's audience research bureau.⁵

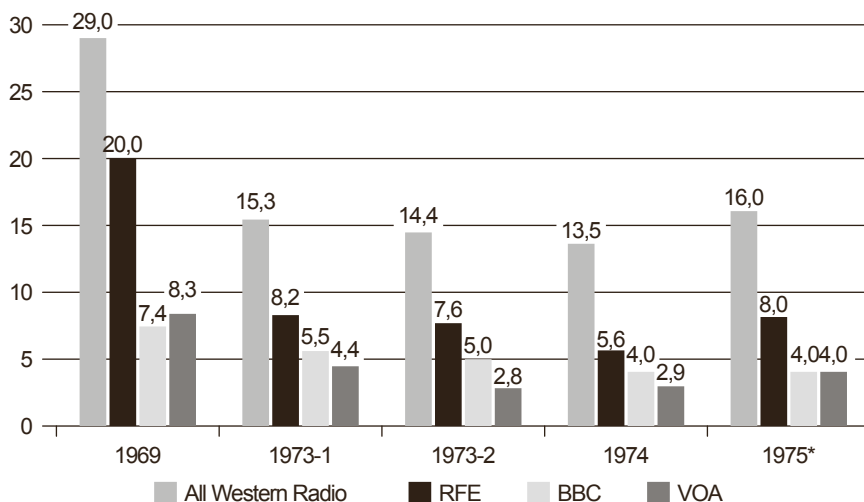
The results of the first documented poll from February 1969 probably cannot be compared with the following years because in 1969 OBOP put the question only to those who owned a radio. The report on a poll in 1973⁶ indicated that the research was done on a representative sample of the total number of radio listeners in the country. A report on an OBOP poll from April 1975 first indicated that the research was being

⁴ Major Zdzisław Mrowiec, "Subversive Influence of Radio Free Europe on the People's Polish Armed Forces in the Years 1980–1985" (Warsaw, 1986).

⁵ "Audience Response to Western Broadcasts and Leaflets, July 1956–December 1956, Part II On Poland," Assessment Memorandum, Audience Analysis Section, Radio Free Europe, Munich, No. 37, August 1957, 1–53. All cited RFE/RL documents are deposited in the Hoover Institution Archives.

⁶ As indicated in the table below, two different surveys were conducted in 1973.

Figure 1. OBOP Surveys of Western Radio 1969–1975



*Note: OBOP documents present the 1975 data as whole number percentages only.

conducted based on representative samples of the total population above 15 years of age.

Figure 1 gives these numbers, which are highly questionable due to the methodology employed. Furthermore, Western radio listeners at the time were unlikely to volunteer information on listening to what were considered anti-regime broadcasts. Even prompted information is probably an undercount for the same reason.

Unfortunately, OBOP's statistical data from 1975 on are not entirely comparable either. Over the years that OBOP surveys on Western radio listening were carried out, different sets of questions were used, and the questionnaires were not identical. Furthermore, the same answers were interpreted in different ways at different times. For example, the draft report on the research conducted in November 1976 stated:

"The given figures for the listeners to RFE in November – 11.3% of the total Polish adult population, that is about three (3) million people, are based on spontaneous responses to the question regarding listening to Western radio stations. The additional control questions for that year show that a certain number of people listening to RFE, for a variety of reasons, did not disclose such a fact in their spontaneous responses. Therefore, based on additional questions, the estimated analysis shows that the real RFE audience is rather closer to the number of audience to

the total Western stations broadcasting programs in the Polish language (in November, 1976 – 20%, that is about five (5) million people.) These figures pertain to those who are tuning in relatively regularly as well as those who are tuning in occasionally.”

Similar notes appear in reports on research conducted in 1977 and 1978. For that reason, for the polls conducted from 1976 through 1978, two sets of results are given regarding the total RFE listenership in Poland: the first figure is based only on spontaneous responses, while the second also takes into account the control questions.⁷ The differences are fundamental. For example, in 1978, only 21% of respondents spontaneously mentioned listening to RFE, yet when prompted, an additional 10.5% of respondents admitted listening, giving a total reach of 31.5%.⁸

The OBOP scientists had no doubts as to which of the two research results was more reliable. They opted for the higher figure, corrected to take into account the control questions. In the three following years (1980–82), in the three existing draft communiqués, only the single figure is given, which probably reflects the control questions as well. For this reason, in 1980 OBOP cites total RFE listenership at 48%, then 53% in 1981 and 49% in 1982.

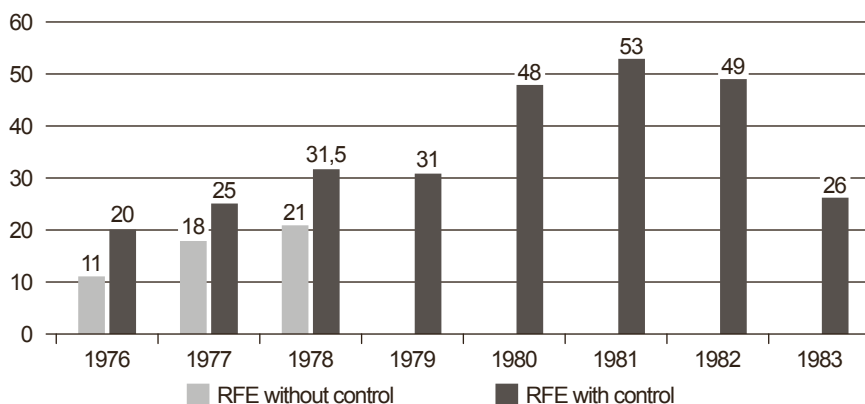
Figure 2 shows the results of surveys where follow-on questions were asked. As noted above, however, even these results could have been undercounts, particularly considering that both the EEAOR and WAP data show RFE listenership at over 60% in 1981.

After the introduction of martial law in Poland (December 1981), working conditions at OBOP changed, just as they did everywhere else in the country. To what extent the research itself was affected is not clear; however, it seems that freedom to interpret the data became limited, given that the method of interpreting the RFE-related research results changed once again. Two documents show the research results from the 1980s: the draft version of the communiqué presenting the results of the March 1983 survey and a similar draft communiqué from May 1988.

⁷ For the year 1979, although the researchers apparently used the same methodology, the only figure available is the one based on the control questions.

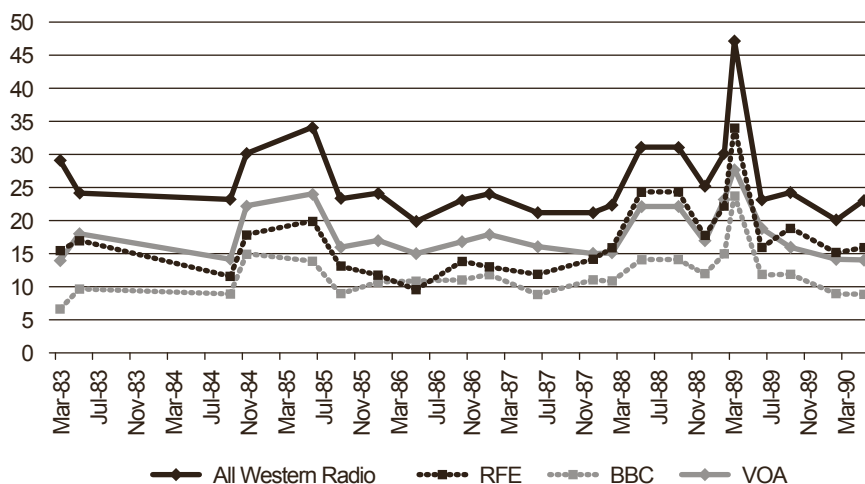
⁸ As indicated in Figure 2, the available OBOP figures for RFE listenership from 1976 on were rounded to a whole number, with the exception of this figure. Throughout this chapter, all percentages will be presented to one decimal point where possible. When percentages are given as whole numbers, this indicates that the data in question are available only in this format.

Figure 2. OBOP Surveys of RFE 1976–1983



The 1983 report states that 29% of those polled declared listening at least occasionally to foreign stations, with 26% listening to RFE. However, the 1988 communiqué, which also quotes data from research performed in previous years, maintains that RFE's listenership in March 1983 was only 15% of Poland's total adult population. Furthermore, while earlier documents showed RFE's 1980 listenership as 48%, the 1988 document maintains that the RFE audience in 1980 was only 15%—that is, three times smaller than previously stated.

Figure 3. OBOP Surveys of Western Radio 1983–1990



This indicates that, after 1983, either a new questionnaire was introduced, or the answers to the same questions began to be interpreted differently. In any case, the old data from 1980 concerning Western radio audiences clearly were worked over retrospectively, using a method that allowed for presenting lower ratings. Such were the propaganda needs of the Polish People's Republic authorities at that time. Thus, most of the data in Figure 3 are highly questionable.

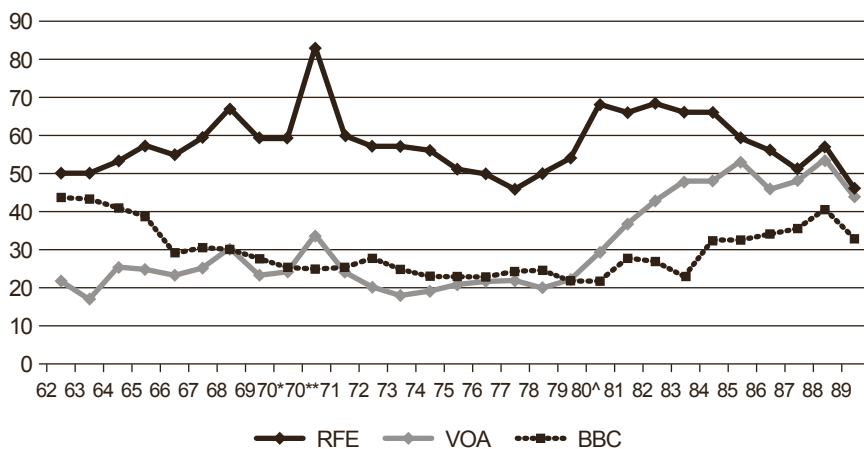
However, the March 1989 survey—which shows higher listening rates for all broadcasters—was commissioned from OBOP by the BBC. Although these figures are still substantially lower than the (presumably more accurate) EEAOR figures for 1989, their lack of congruence with the overall low listening rates reported by OBOP during this period indicates that perhaps a different, more reliable research method was used for the BBC survey.

EEAOR Data. As noted earlier, although EEAOR began conducting surveys of RFE listeners in the 1950s, these surveys did not produce reliable results until the number of Poles visiting Western Europe and participating in the opinion polls increased. The 1962/63 survey represented the first reliable audience measurement, as the Polish sample for the first time consisted of more than 1,000 respondents.⁹ Figure 4 presents the results of the EEAOR surveys from 1962 to 1989, after martial law and jamming of RFE ended, and when the department ceased to conduct traveler surveys. (Weekly reach estimates for Poland and other Eastern European countries based on EEAOR surveys can be found in Appendix C). The EEAOR data from 1962 to 1978 can be considered the best available estimates of listening for that period, as other reliable sources for comparison are available only after 1979.

In the early 1960s, exactly half of all adult Poles listened to RFE. Over the next several years, RFE listenership increased as confidence in Polish Communist leader Władysław Gomułka declined, reaching its decade peak of 67% in 1968, the year of student unrest in Poland and the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. In late 1970 and early 1971, the period of the workers' riots in Poland, RFE listenership reached an all-time peak of 83%, then declined to about 50% in the late 1970s. This decrease

⁹ Sample sizes were as follows: 1962/63: 1,302; 1963/64: 1,675; 1964: 859; 1969/70: 1,371; 1973/74: 1,338; 1974/75: 1,309; 1975/76: 1,552; 1976/77: 1,798; 1977/78: 1,515; 1978/79: 1,646; 1980: 379; 1982/83: 1,813; 1983/84: 1,743; 1985/86: 1,629; 1986/87: 1,513; 1989: 1,565.

Figure 4. Annual Reach of Western Radio in Poland:
1962–1989 EEAOR Data



*Refers to survey conducted in May 1970.

**Refers to survey conducted from late December 1970 through March 1971.

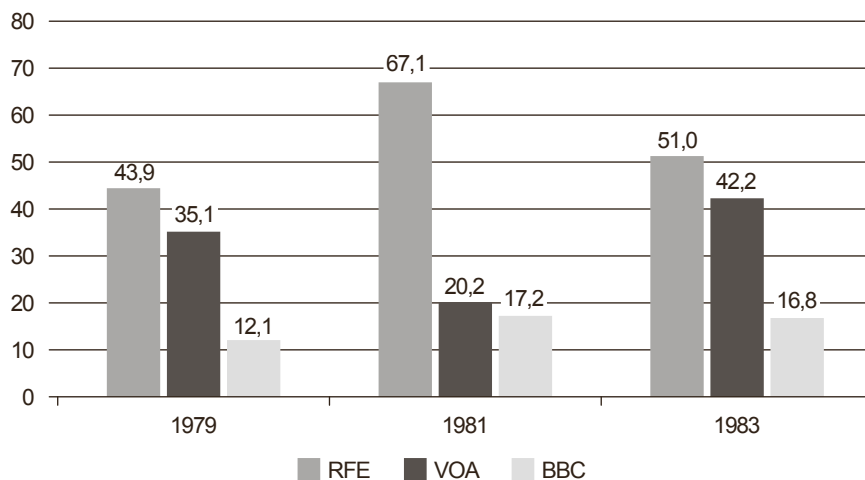
^Refers to special crisis survey conducted in late 1980, with a sample size of 379.

in listenership probably occurred because of hopes for pragmatic changes during Edward Gierek's tenure as Party leader beginning in 1970, coupled with intensified jamming of the broadcasts (from outside Poland). The trends in RFE listenership from 1979 through the 1980s will be discussed below.

WAP Data. WAP surveyed RFE, VOA and BBC listenership among both professional soldiers (including officers, cadets, and non-commissioned officers) and drafted soldiers. As noted earlier, because the results of these surveys are still considered "secret" in post-Communist Poland, statistical data are available only for the years 1979, 1981, and 1983.

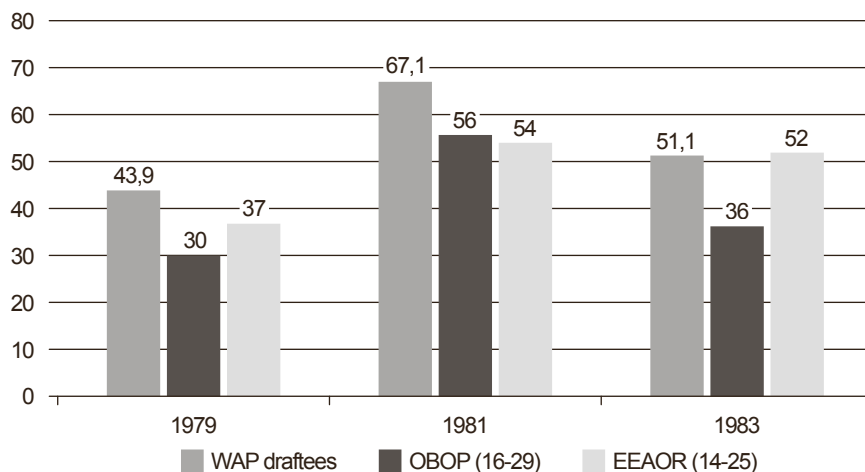
The surveys conducted by WAP were, as far as is known, the only opinion polls on Western radio listenership in Poland conducted by a research institution independent of civilian propaganda authorities (which supervised OBOP), and using professional research methods. Furthermore, as this was a conscript army, the draftees group (mostly aged 18–20) closely represented the general Polish population of young adult males. Therefore, the results are invaluable as a source of comparison with the OBOP polls and EEAOR surveys from this period. The WAP data are presented in Figures 5, 6, and 7.

Figure 5. Western Radio Listening Among Draftees: WAP Data



When analyzing the results of the WAP surveys, it is important to consider that, despite the researchers' highly professional approach, the Polish officer corps at the time of the surveys was subject to strict mili-

Figure 6. Listenership Among Army Draftees vs. Young Listeners in Poland



[The OBOP figure of 30% for 1979 represents the RFE listenership rate among the adult population. No figure for the 16–29 age group is available. It was only stated that the RFE listenership rate in the young age group was slightly lower than that of older age group (Komitet do Spraw Radia i Telewizji, "Polskie Radio i Telewizja," February 20, 1979).]

tary discipline and intensive political indoctrination. Admitting to RFE listenership—even in an anonymous poll—was a big risk for any professional soldier and, to a lesser degree, for draftees as well. This would suggest that WAP's estimate of audiences to Western radio would be lower than the EEAOR figures, although it is not possible to make a direct comparison between the young male audience represented by the draftee population and the total Polish adult audience (as surveyed by EEAOR).¹⁰ Thus, as might be expected, in both 1979 and 1983, WAP's figures for RFE listenership among draftees (43.9% and 51.0%, respectively) were substantially lower than EEAOR's figures for RFE's total audience (54% and 66%, respectively). Nonetheless, the WAP figure for 1979 (43.9%) is much higher than OBOP's estimate of 31% listenership to RFE for that year, which indicates that the OBOP figure is too low and thus probably inaccurate.

However, in 1981, the WAP data show that 67.1% of draftees reported listening to RFE; this figure is nearly identical to EEAOR's total audience estimate (66%) for that year, and substantially higher than EEAOR's estimate of listenership in the under-26 population (54%). Perhaps the timing of this survey, during Poland's crisis period and just before martial law, could explain the draftees' willingness to admit listening to RFE at this time. Strangely, though, the WAP results for the same year showed much smaller audiences for VOA and BBC than did EEAOR: 20.2% and 17.2% respectively for draftees, in contrast to 37% and 28% as reported for the Polish adult population (EEAOR). (The OBOP documents do not show any data on VOA or BBC for 1981.)

WAP research established that a significant number of listeners tuned in not only to one Western station, but in most cases to RFE and another station (either VOA or BBC). A minority group (12.6% of draftees) reported listening to all three stations.

Despite the sometimes wide differences between WAP and EEAOR estimates for their audiences, VOA and BBC clearly were a stable element of the Polish radio environment during the Cold War, though their popularity was considerably less than that of RFE in the early years. For most of the 1960s and 1970s, according to EEAOR, listenership to both stations was less than 30% of the Polish adult population. The EEAOR data show a sharp increase in VOA listenership in the early 1980s, during the political crisis and the beginning of martial law, with the broadcaster

¹⁰ For further discussion of this issue, see "Comparison of Data" below.

more than doubling its pre-crisis audience within only four years (from 22% in 1979/80 to 48% in 1983/84). However, as indicated in Figure 5, the WAP data do not support this. The military data show VOA listenership (among draftees) at 35.1% in 1979, then decreasing to 20.2% in 1981 before reaching a high of 42.2% in 1983. This last figure corresponds fairly closely to EEAOR's estimate of 48% VOA listenership in 1983.

According to EEAOR, VOA's audience remained at around half the population throughout the martial law period, with listenership reaching 54% in 1988, coming very close to RFE's total listenership for that year (57%). The EEAOR data show that the BBC's audience also increased somewhat during the martial law period, starting in 1984, but peaked at only 41% in 1988.

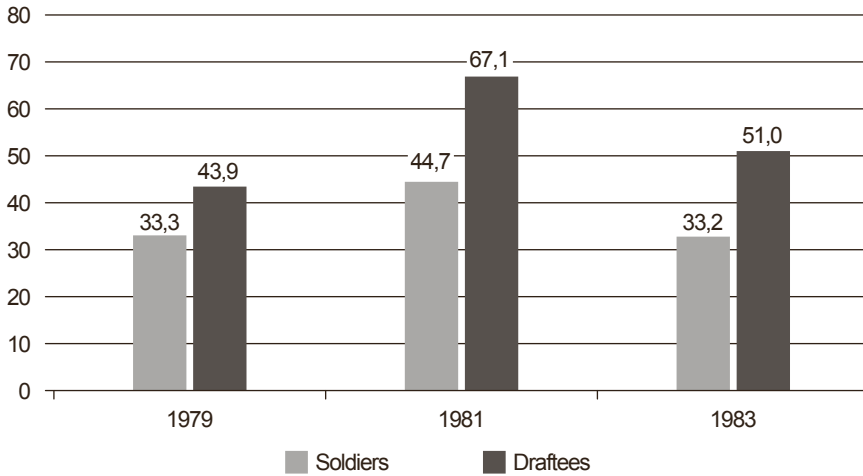
Two major reasons for VOA's success during the martial law period were that RFE was subject to heavy jamming from the USSR and other Soviet bloc countries (albeit not from within Poland) while VOA was not, and that Poles wanted to hear an authoritative voice of the US government. The jamming of RFE likely contributed to the increased BBC listenership as well.

According to WAP, in 1983 among the three categories of professional soldiers—officers, cadets and non-commissioned officers—non-commissioned officers (the company leaders) formed the largest group of Western radio listeners. (Exact figures are not available.) This group included daily listeners, whereas among officers and cadets the predominant number of listeners would tune in either “from time to time” or “seldom.”

As mentioned above, the draftees by definition were more closely associated with the rest of Polish civilian society, since all men between the ages of 18 and 20 were required to serve in the army. Thus, a comparison of these data with the pertinent OBOP and EEAOR data for the given years is included below.

Comparison of Data. In all likelihood, the EEAOR data from 1969 forward are the most reliable of the three sources presented here, given that the methodology used was verified by outside experts as accurate within a reasonable margin of error, and given that local institutes in several different countries produced similar results. The history of OBOP indicates that the Center's results from 1976 to 1982 were the most reliable data from that institution. However, even within that short timeframe, only the figures from 1980, 1981, and 1982 can be considered reasonably

Figure 7. RFE Listenership in the Military: WAP Data



accurate, due to the freedom to conduct and interpret research during the period just before martial law began to impact OBOP's work.

Although not much is known about the methodology employed by WAP researchers, the results of their surveys can be considered essentially reliable since this institution functioned independently of the Polish propaganda apparatus and collected data for internal purposes only. Nonetheless, as discussed earlier, both the OBOP and WAP figures for listenership to RFE and other Western stations are probably low, given the regime's hostile attitude toward the broadcasts and the risks associated with acknowledging the habit of listening. Thus, the period for which all three sources of data are available and relatively reliable—1979 to 1982—is the richest period for comparison and analysis.

As shown in Figures 6–7, the WAP data for 1979 and 1981 indicate that actual RFE listenership among young people (at least, among men aged 18 to 20) was substantially higher than either the OBOP or EEAOR surveys would suggest, which is surprising considering that the military environment was not especially suitable for listening to RFE. Furthermore, the WAP-determined RFE listenership for 1981 (67.1%) was slightly higher even than EEAOR's figure for RFE's total listenership in Poland for that year (66%).

Nonetheless, in 1981, when OBOP staff enjoyed the greatest freedom of scientific research and interpretation, the Center produced results nearly identical to those of EEAOR for RFE listenership in the youngest

age group (56% and 54% respectively). This further confirms the reliability of the EEAOR data and indicates that the OBOP data from other years are suspect.

In 1983, the WAP figure for RFE listenership was practically identical to the EEAOR-determined listening rate among young Poles (51% and 52% respectively). The draftees polled by WAP in 1983 were drafted in the spring or fall of 1982, which means that they were still in the civilian environment during the dramatic years 1980 and 1981. Therefore, their political attitudes and radio listening habits should have been decisively influenced by their personal experiences over the previous two years, and should be closest to those of their age group in civil society.

Given that the WAP survey results on RFE listenership among draftees were higher than those of the EEAOR surveys in 1979 and 1981, and in light of the conformity of WAP and EEAOR survey results in 1983, the low OBOP results on total RFE listenership for the year 1983—first shown as 26% and retroactively reduced to 15%—point strongly to the intervention of the propaganda apparatus in this institution's research after the year 1982. It indicates that the OBOP data from 1983 onward were highly suspect, whereas the EEAOR data probably more closely reflected the real listening situation.

In the following years, EEAOR data show that RFE listenership gradually decreased from 66% in 1983 to 51% in 1987, recovered somewhat in 1988 after jamming was stopped (57%), and then dropped to an all-time low of 46% in 1989, when the first non-Communist government was formed in Poland. An OBOP survey from 1992 indicates that about half of those who stopped listening to RFE in the 1980s did so in 1989–1990. These former listeners cited a changed political situation and the improvement of domestic media as their main reasons for no longer tuning in to RFE.

RFE Audience Structure

Both OBOP and EEAOR analyzed the social and demographic characteristics of RFE's audience in many of their surveys. Until 1975, EEAOR also provided breakdowns of the Polish audiences to VOA, BBC, and Radio Luxemburg. Beginning in 1968, EEAOR analyzed the make-up of RFE's Polish audience by gender, age, and education level.

The OBOP provided data on audience structure only in the years 1978, 1979, 1981, 1982 and 1989 (when its data were most reliable); however, the data on age for 1978 and 1979 are not available. Thus, it is possible to compare the data from the two research institutions for the 1980s, and in terms of gender and education for the late 1970s as well.

Data from both sources demonstrate that before and after the Polish crisis (between 1978 and 1989), men tuned in to RFE more often than women did. VOA and BBC audiences also followed this trend. The only foreign radio station that had an equal male/female audience (and in 1975, more women listening than men) was Radio Luxemburg in the 1970s. However, EEAOR's 1982/83 survey—conducted after the introduction of martial law—showed men and women listening to RFE at the same high rate (68%). This surprising result is not confirmed by OBOP, which shows consistently higher listenership among men throughout the survey period.

The OBOP data also show a consistent trend in listenership by educational level: the higher the education, the more likely a person was to listen to RFE. The EEAOR data show the same trend from the early 1960s, through the 1970s, until 1982. However two later EEAOR surveys indicate a reversal of this trend, with the university-educated subgroup least likely to listen, and the elementary-educated subgroup most likely to listen. Without additional statistical data from EEAOR or a third source it is not possible to verify such a change.

Opposite trends also occur in OBOP and EEAOR's data on the structure of RFE's audience by age. As mentioned above, OBOP provided a breakdown by age only for three years—1981, 1982, and 1989—which makes it difficult to compare trends over time. Nonetheless, for these three years, the trends that emerge are quite different. OBOP shows the highest rates of listenership every year among the youngest age group (16–29), with the likelihood of listening to RFE decreasing with age. The EEAOR results, on the other hand, show a fairly consistent trend of listenership rates increasing with age for the entire period of its surveys (1968–1989). Again, it is difficult to assess which trend might be more accurate. Interestingly, as noted earlier, despite the contradictory trends, the OBOP and EEAOR data for listenership in the youngest age group for 1981 and 1982 were quite similar: 56% and 53% respectively for OBOP, and 54% and 52% respectively for EEAOR. One possible reason for the differences in results for the “middle-aged” group could be the different age ranges used in analyzing the data: OBOP in-

cluded people aged 30 to 49 in this middle group, whereas the EEAOR data started at age 26.

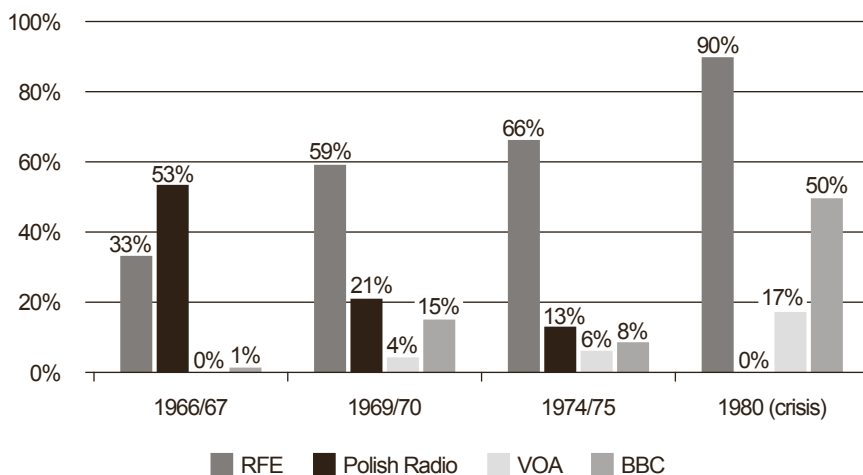
Reliability of Information

Both EEAOR and OBOP analyzed the reliability of RFE's information, in some cases in comparison to Polish state radio and/or other international broadcasters, in a number of surveys. EEAOR assessed this issue periodically between 1966 and 1987, whereas OBOP data on the question are available only for the years 1978, 1981, and 1982 (the latter two years representing OBOP's most accurate data). This section presents the available data chronologically, beginning with EEAOR survey data. It should be noted that the results of the individual EEAOR surveys conducted are not directly comparable due to the differing character of questions; however, the following charts present data from several different surveys that all reflect assessments of RFE's reliability. Explanations of the sample size and questions used in each survey are provided below.

The 1966/67 data reflect a survey sample of 632 Polish nationals in which 99% of respondents reported listening to domestic radio. Respondents were asked, "Which station broadcasts the most reliable and complete information about events in Poland/external events?" However, it should be noted that the sample did not accurately reflect the Polish population—for example, more than 60% of those surveyed were under 36. In addition, the sample represented a disproportionate amount of men, urban residents, the university-educated segment, and the "higher-occupation" segment. Furthermore, the total RFE listenership in this sample (50%) was slightly lower than EEAOR's published listening rates from 1966 (53%) and 1967 (58%) as shown in Figure 4; those figures were based on results from much larger samples for 1966 and 1967 (1,794) and thus were probably more accurate. These discrepancies could partially explain the huge difference between the 1966/67 reliability data and those from the following survey in 1969/70. However, the turnaround in Poles' trust in RFE versus Polish Radio over the course of those two years almost certainly was related to current events as well, as discussed below.

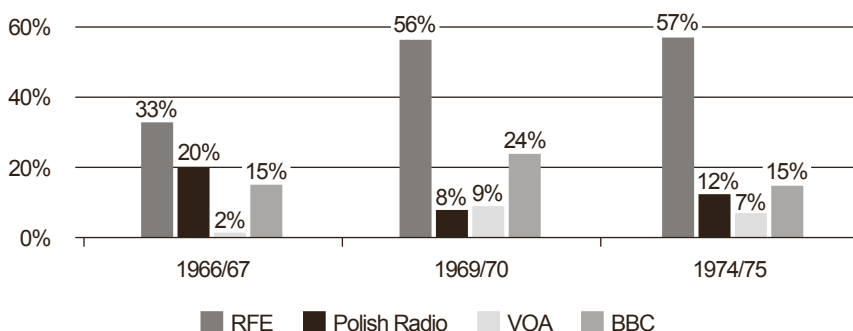
The 1969/70 data reflect a survey sample of 1,157 Polish nationals who were asked, "Which station broadcasts the most reliable information about political events in/outside your country?" This question is quite

Figure 8. Most Reliable Source for Domestic Events



similar to the one asked in the previous survey, but eliminates the factor of completeness of information and specifies “political” events, whereas the previous survey left the question open to all types of events. This survey was conducted after the Polish domestic unrest of 1968 and the subsequent Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia, but before the December 1970 workers’ riots. Consequently, it is perhaps not surprising that nearly three times more Poles named RFE as the most reliable broadcaster on do-

Figure 9. Most Reliable Source for External Events



*Note: These tables do not include figures for those whose reply was “none” or who gave no answer; as such, the figures for 1966/67 and 1974/75 do not add up to 100%. Also, the 1980 survey apparently allowed respondents to give more than one answer, hence the high numbers for RFE, VOA, and BBC.

mestic events compared to Polish Radio (59% vs. 21%); in the category of foreign events, the ratio was 7:1 (56% for RFE vs. 8% for Polish Radio).

The 1974/75 survey reflects a sample of 1,309 Polish nationals who were asked slightly different questions: “Which of the radio stations you listen to would you turn to for the most reliable information if an important event took place in Poland” and “If an important international event took place, which radio station would you turn to for the most reliable information?” The data in the charts above reflect answers from respondents who reported listening to at least two stations, and thus had a basis for comparison.¹¹

The 1980 data presented above show the results of a special survey of 314 Polish nationals (with a sampling error of +/- 7.5%) conducted between August and November of that year to evaluate the coverage provided by international and domestic radio broadcasters in Poland during the Solidarity crisis period. This survey did not include any questions about coverage of international events. Participants were asked, “Which Station You Listened to Had the Most Reliable Coverage of These (Crisis) Events?” As in the previous survey, the data provided in the chart reflect the responses of those who listened to at least two stations. In this case, they were allowed to name more than one station—hence the high figures for both RFE (90%) and BBC (50%). The question also was put to respondents who identified themselves as listeners to “domestic radio only.” Remarkably, only one-third of them associated reliability with domestic radio.

While OBOP did ask RFE listeners to compare the quality of RFE’s information with that of domestic media in 1981 (Polish Radio only) and in 1982 (Polish Radio and TV), these data are not comparable to the EE-AOR data as they do not directly address reliability, nor does EEAOR have reliability data for those years. Nonetheless, the OBOP data for these critical years confirm that most RFE listeners, as indicated by EEAOR’s 1980 crisis survey, did not consider information from domestic media reliable. For example, in 1982, the majority of RFE listeners did not fully trust information from domestic TV, nor were they satisfied with the timeliness, completeness or objectivity of the information. Conversely, in

¹¹ Of 1,157 Poles in the 1969/70 sample 1,033 answered the question referring to the most reliable station on home events, whereas 1,020 answered the question referring to the most reliable station on foreign events.

Out of 1,309 Poles in the 1974/75 sample, 973 respondents tuned in to more than one station: 100% listened to Radio Warsaw, 76% to RFE, 31% to BBC and 26% to VOA.

1981, when asked to cite their primary motivation for listening to RFE, more than three-quarters of listeners identified one of the following reasons: the truthfulness of RFE's information (28%), its timeliness (24%), or the desire to hear information unavailable from domestic media (26%).

As mentioned above, OBOP data specifically assessing RFE's reliability are available only for the years 1978, 1981 and 1982. Table 1 presents the results of answers to the question: "How truthful is the information about Poland broadcast by RFE?" The figures in the table represent the percentage of RFE listeners who chose each response.

Table 1. OBOP Data: Truthfulness of RFE's Information

	<i>1978</i>	<i>1981</i>	<i>1982</i>
Everything is true	24%	22%	12%
Most is true	54%	67%	63%
Most is not true	21%	5%	17%
All are lies (not true)	2%	0%	1%
No opinion	<1%	6%	7%

For the purposes of analysis, we can consider the combination of the responses "everything is true" and "most is true" to indicate the percentage of listeners who considered RFE's information reliable: 78% in 1978, 89% in 1981, and 75% in 1982.

In the years 1978, 1983, and 1986/87, EEAOR asked listeners to evaluate RFE in several categories: reliability, responsibility, modernity of programming technique, and tone. Table 2 presents the data for reliability only.

Table 2. EEAOR Data: Listeners' Assessments of RFE's Reliability

	<i>1978</i>	<i>1983</i>	<i>1986/87</i>
Reliable	74%	71%	67%
Unreliable	2%	3%	4%
No. of listeners surveyed	817	1,553	844

In 1978, OBOP data show that 78% of RFE listeners considered the Polish Service's information reliable, compared to 74% for EEAOR. Com-

paring OBOP's 1982 data to EEAOR's 1983 data again produces similar results: 75% for OBOP versus 71% for EEAOR. Unfortunately, EEAOR did not have comparable data for 1981, a pivotal year in Poland between the social crisis of 1980 and the introduction of martial law. However, the OBOP data for that year are considered relatively accurate; thus the 89% trust in RFE among its listeners probably reflects the lack of trust in domestic media at that time, which also resulted in high levels of listenership to RFE in Poland.

Conclusions

The results of the surveys carried out in the 1980s by WAP combined with the relevant results of the surveys carried out by OBOP in 1981 confirm that the method of Comparative and Continual Sampling perfected by RFE produced reliable results, especially over a longer period of time. This shows, in a new light, the value of the surveys carried out by RFE/RL among some 100,000 travelers from Poland and other countries of Central and Eastern Europe, as identical methods were used in respect to all the target countries.

The strong position of RFE in Poland was the result of high levels of trust and confidence on the part of listeners, built over the course of many years. The prevailing attitude of Polish listeners could be characterized as a search for information unavailable in Polish media, a desire to assess such information comparatively (using also other Western radio stations, domestic Polish radio, TV and press) and, armed with this information, to draw their own conclusions. RFE played a role as the most significant opinion-forming public institution—one that was trusted, but at times critically assessed by its Polish listeners, especially by the elite.

These attitudes were reflected in the mechanism of flow-of-information during the Polish crisis in 1980. The informal channels of communication involving friends, relatives and colleagues came in first place, RFE in a strong second place, VOA, BBC and Deutschlandfunk in third place, and domestic media last of all. Polish citizens were thus able to communicate, listen, trust one another and finally cooperate.

When analyzing RFE's performance over the years and its success as demonstrated by the size of the Polish audience, two factors of predominant significance should be considered: what RFE's message was, and how it was conveyed.

RFE conveyed a vision of the world based not only on the outcome of the American Revolution, but also on the outcome of the French Revolution, on European traditions, and on the system of moral values of the Catholic Church with its charismatic Polish Pope.

RFE was like a laser beam that transmitted to Poland what was most valuable in the West, channeling contributions not only from RFE staffers but also from the Polish émigré elite, the thousands of Polish intellectuals who had remained in the West after World War II, the thinking of the European non-communist Left, supported by the Congress of Cultural Freedom, and, later, the broad opposition movement inside Poland itself.

APPENDIX C

Weekly Listening Rates for Major Western Broadcasters to Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Bulgaria and the USSR During the Cold War

Figures 1–5 below are based on data collected and analyzed by the East European Audience and Opinion Research of RFE/RL (EEAOR) for Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania and Bulgaria. They present weekly reach figures (the percentage of listeners in the adult population, 15 years and older, reached in the course of an average week) for the major Western broadcasters to each country. Estimates are based on surveys conducted in Western Europe among more than 100,000 travelers from the respective countries. The methodology is described in Chapter Seven.

Figure 6 presents figures for the USSR based on data collected and analyzed by the Soviet Audience and Opinion Research unit of RFE/RL (SAAOR). It is based on over 50,000 interviews conducted among travelers outside the USSR, and estimates are projected using the MIT mass-media computer simulation methodology referred to in Chapter Six. The interview and computer simulation methodology are explained in more detail in Parta, *Discovering the Hidden Listener*, *op. cit.*, 75–82.

The reports on which these compilations are based are on file in the RFE/RL collection in the Archives of the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

Figure 1. Weekly Reach of Western Radios in Poland: 1963–1989

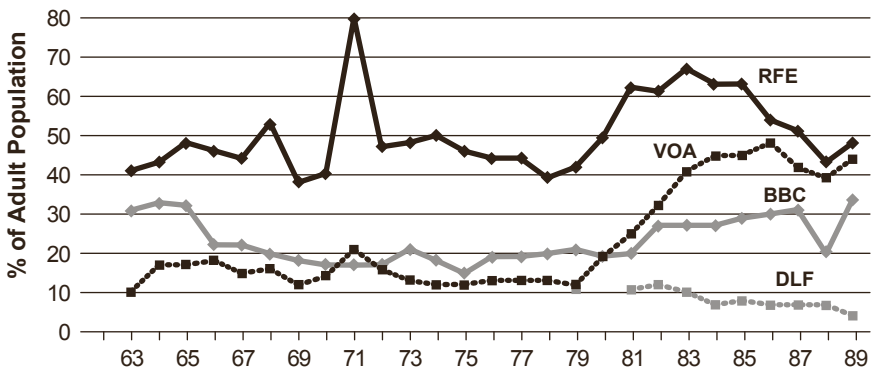


Figure 2. Weekly Reach of Western Radios in Hungary: 1962–1988

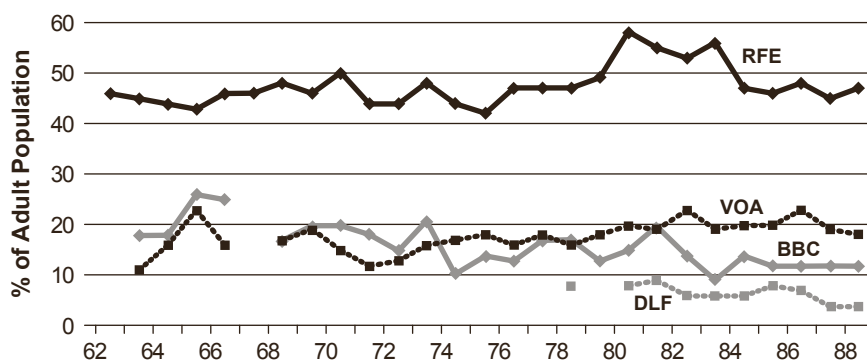


Figure 3. Weekly Reach of Western Radios in Czechoslovakia: 1963–1988

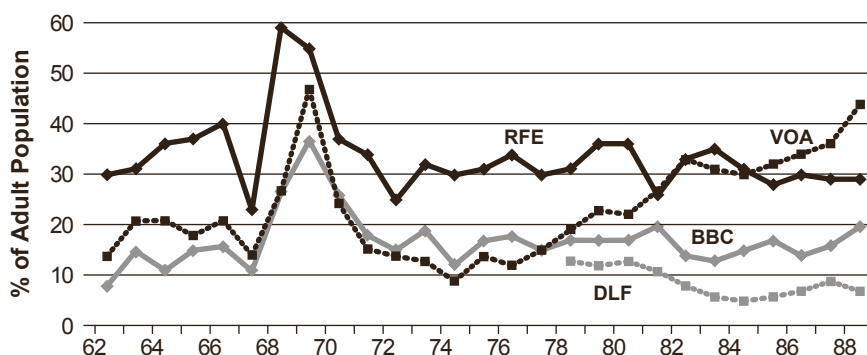


Figure 4. Weekly Reach of Western Radios in Romania: 1962–1988

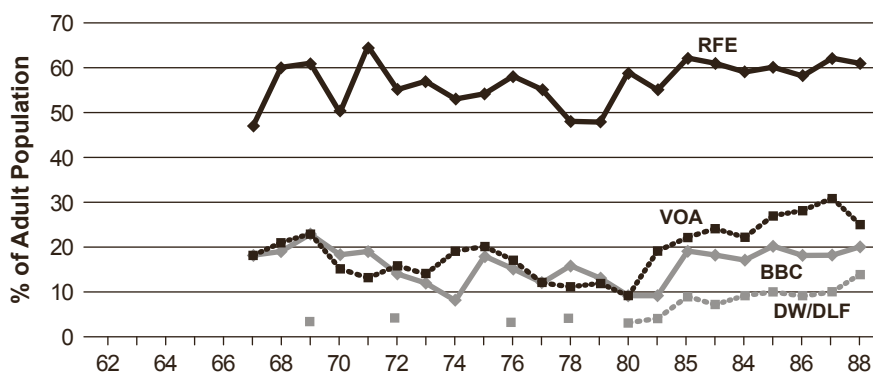


Figure 5. Weekly Reach of Western Radios in Bulgaria: 1962–1988

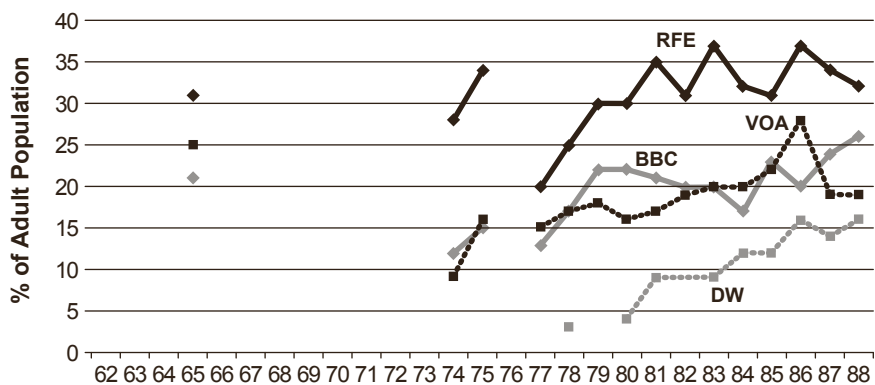
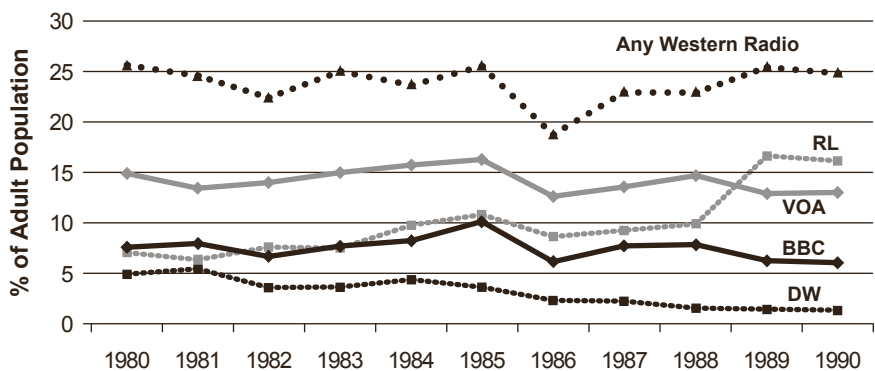


Figure 6. Weekly Reach of Major Western Broadcasters in the USSR: 1980–1990



Part 3

IMPACT OF WESTERN BROADCASTS IN EASTERN EUROPE

CHAPTER 8

Radio Free Europe in the Eyes of the Polish Communist Elite

JANE LEFTWICH CURRY

Radio Free Europe played a complex role in Polish elite politics. In the process of providing Poles with information about the realities of life and politics their media did not report, it served as an alternative source of information for the Polish elite, a goad for them to open up the media they controlled, and it even influenced their decisions about policy.¹ Clearly, in this area, Poland was different from the rest of the Soviet Bloc. The greater divisions within the Polish elite, and the weaker links between the political elite and the population, undermined the elite to the extent that they felt obliged to listen, respond, and worry about what their people heard in ways East European elites with greater control did not. At the same time, the Polish story is a clear illustration of the tension leaders feel between what they allow to be said and what people are ready to believe (based on what they see around them) and the distrust leaders have in the media they control in all authoritarian states.

¹ The information and analysis in this chapter are based on open-ended interviews conducted with 40 former Polish leaders in 2002–2004 by the author. These interviews were focused on the role and use of RFE and other Western radio stations in the context of the decision-making process, and the way politics was conducted in Poland during the communist era. The interviewees included, among others, Wojciech Jaruzelski, two Communist-era First Secretaries of the PUP (Mieczysław Rakowski and Stanisław Kania); Minister of Interior Czesław Kiszczak; heads of the departments of the Party responsible for propaganda, ideology, and the media from the 1950s and 1960s; workers in media-related Party offices in this period; members of the Politburo from all of the communist-era regimes; heads of Polish television; editors of *Trybuna Ludu*; directors of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism; officials at the two major public opinion research institutes; a censor; individuals in the Ministry of Interior; and prominent journalists or politically involved individuals. The (untranscribed) oral interviews are deposited and available for research at the Hoover Archives.

The Polish political elite, at different times and to differing degrees, viewed Radio Free Europe as one of the chief elements undermining Poles' support for the Communist government, as an indicator of American government and CIA positions on Polish politics, as a weapon in internal elite politics, as a mouthpiece, and even organizer, for the opposition in Poland, and as a source of "truth" on what was happening in Poland and the rest of the world (especially other Communist countries and Germany). They never simply ignored it. Instead, they took action to ensure that they knew what it said, and to try either to block it or to counter its messages to the population.

Because they feared the potential impact of its revelations on the Polish population as a whole, the elite responded to Radio Free Europe broadcasts by jamming them, spying on the station, and trying to discredit its operation and its reports. At the same time, the top leadership valued the broadcasts. Complete transcripts of all broadcasts (excluding music and purely entertainment programs) were circulated to the Politburo and those responsible for the media and military. Depending on how top leaders governed, and the political situation at the time, these transcripts were sometimes reviewed carefully and sometimes disregarded at the very top. Culled versions of the broadcasts were sent out to a larger group of elites with instructions—in general and for specific organs—on what was to be said in response to what Radio Free Europe broadcast, and how information from RFE should be treated. Although being well reported on was not a good thing for Polish Communist leaders, the elites interviewed for this project who had been reported on by RFE expressed gratitude for its restraint, and also for the veiled support they got from RFE in 1956 and in moments of crisis afterwards. The leadership used RFE in its own deliberations and to inform itself, and also took seriously its impact on Polish listeners. This prompted the establishment of two active public opinion research agencies, one focused largely on audience, and it also helped increase the range of the "allowable" in the Polish media.

The story of the Polish elites' use of and response to RFE demonstrates the importance, not only of popular pressures, but of the varying perception and style of the top leadership concerning how much information should be sought out by the elites, what kind, from where, and to what end it should be used. From the Stalinist period on, it was not only the institutions and events but also the top leaders that determined whether the focus would be on building walls against RFE or on making use of it. Ironically, given the attempts of the Soviet Union to hold the bloc to

a common policy in most areas, the Soviet elite seems not to have really cared about what RFE said or how the Polish elite dealt with it.

Stalinist Era: RFE's Emergence

In the Stalinist era, collecting leaflets from balloons that the Free Europe Committee (RFE's parent organization) sent into Polish airspace and, after 1950, listening to the Polish broadcasts of Radio Free Europe were treated as serious crimes. Those who were reported to have leaflets or to be listening to the Radio were often jailed or ousted from their workplaces and educational institutions. Jamming was done both from Poland and from stations in the USSR. In retrospect, it is clear that none of this deterred listeners either in the general population or among the Party elite. Although many interviewees from the Polish political elite in the 1950s explicitly denied the significance and veracity of RFE, virtually all of them admitted to listening to it or getting reports on what was said through family and friends. In each case, they made clear that they took seriously what they had heard or had reported to them.

Without exception, interviewees who were part of the political establishment before and after the Polish events of 1956 said that the 1954 broadcasts of Józef Światło, a defector from the Polish secret police whose reports on the corruption and repression of his organization were aired on Radio Free Europe, had an effect on the Party the very next day. These broadcasts were said to have changed the atmosphere in the police and Party virtually overnight by creating discomfort and distrust among the Party and Police workers. The Party leadership held a secret meeting in December 1954 to discuss Światło's revelations with the secret police and Party bureaucrats. They also reorganized the Ministry of Public Security and limited the power of the secret police. Whether this would have happened as a result of the escalation of popular demands from workers and intellectuals is not clear. What is clear is that RFE's broadcast of this and later events forced the Party to respond faster and more demonstrably than it might otherwise have done, and that Party loyalists were very aware of what was said and gave it a great deal of credibility.

Subsequently, with Communist leader Bierut's death, the release of Władysław Gomułka from jail, the subsequent interregnum in the elite, and the rising tide of popular opposition, Radio Free Europe continued to play a major role in Polish politics not only as an informer of the popu-

lation but as part of the calculations of what was feasible by the Polish elite. It was Radio Free Europe's broadcast of Nikita Khrushchev's Secret Speech in 1956—already circulated by local Party committees to their members in mimeographed form—that was critical not only in getting out the speech to the rest of the world but also in “setting the stage for the [events of the] Polish October,” according to Stanisław Kruszewski, Secretary of the Warsaw Party Committee in 1956–57.

Once events started to escalate in Poland in 1956, RFE played a backup role to the Polish press and reflected the elites' inherent disaffection with the situation in Poland. In the Poznań events and later in the “Polish October,” RFE broadcasts not only filled in the “holes” left by censored Polish media but were said to have alerted the public as the “crises” took place on the streets, and in the Party elite. In the heat of the shift in leadership, amid threats of Soviet invasion in the late fall, RFE's broadcasts reinforced Polish press reports. According to interviewees, Radio Free Europe drew listeners and played a significant role at the outset of the crisis, whenever there were questions as to what was, or was not, being reported, even though the collapse of state control of the media meant that domestic press and broadcasts were providing a vast amount of information, opinion, and speculation.

How the Top Leaders Used Western Media

Use of RFE and other Western media was very much dependent on the style of each individual leader. Starting in the early 1960s (under Władysław Gomułka), there was a regular system of providing complete transcripts to a very limited group of top leaders. Although respondents cited different numbers and recipients, this clearly included the members of the Politburo and Secretariat, the heads of such Central Committee departments as the Press Department and Ideological Department, as well as the Minister of Internal Affairs, and the head of military intelligence. Distillations of broadcasts by RFE and other Western broadcasters were provided for a wider group of Party and media elites, while instructions and responses to what RFE said were presented both orally and in writing to various editors and journalists. Each of these responses was targeted for different audiences.

Władysław Gomułka, Poland's leader from the Polish October in 1956 until 1970, was a voracious reader and seeker of information, ac-

according to those who worked with him. Indeed, they said he often did not get through the materials he collected. His interest was said to be in getting information, rather than engaging in a propaganda battle with the outside, or his internal opponents. He was interested in all that was produced in the West about Poland, Germany, and the Soviet bloc. Much of it he reviewed carefully. According to Party Secretary Artur Starewicz, his assistants did preliminary reviews of all the transcripts of Western broadcasts before he read them and highlighted the most important articles or pieces of information,² though they avoided highlighting information explicitly critical of him.³ His interests, all those in his administration said, were directed by his concern about potential Soviet responses to events in Poland, his unease with his own elites' loyalty to him and his regime, and his desire to double-check information he got from official sources on Germany, the Soviet Union, and on Polish internal affairs. He accumulated more information than he could read.

Edward Gierek, when he took over as First Secretary after the workers' riots in December 1970, was said to have been far less interested in information from the West. His lack of interest in Radio Free Europe and other Western broadcasts reflected this. His concern was with borrowing technology and resources from the West to improve Poland's industrial potential, in order to strengthen the Polish state and buy support. According to his close associate Maciej Szczepański, the television "czar" of his period, what was said in the West, and the criticisms made internally and externally of Poland, were far less important to Gierek than the economic modernization deals and resources he could get from the West. What he wanted were highly compacted and selective memos on specific issues and situations.

Stanisław Kania replaced Gierek in 1981 in the wake of the Solidarity demonstrations. His background gave him a very different approach to information in general, and to Radio Free Europe in particular. He had been the Party Secretary responsible for the Ministry of Interior and the Church. As the leader of Poland during the heyday of the Solidarity movement, he claimed, when he was interviewed in 2003, to have been well aware of what was broadcast on Radio Free Europe but not to have needed it as a source of information on what was happening in Poland. Polish mass media had essentially broken through the censorship barrier,

² Artur Starewicz interview, 2003.

³ Józef Tejchma interview, 2002.

so the information they provided to the public and the leadership was far more complete than it had been. Apart from this, Western and Soviet interest in Solidarity, and the potential for changes in Poland, meant that he was called on to meet with Soviet, East European and Western leaders, or their representatives, far more often. He, therefore, had a direct sense of where Poland stood. He claimed to have reviewed what was broadcast on Radio Free Europe and other Western stations not as a source of information but as a reflection of American interests. He was concerned with the potential of the broadcasts to exacerbate Soviet concerns,⁴ and the possibility that the reports would further radicalize the Polish population. At the time, and in his interviews, Kania criticized RFE for serving as a mouthpiece for the protests of Solidarity and the intellectual dissidents.

Kania's successor, Wojciech Jaruzelski, like Gomulka, was an active collector of information. He had served as the head of the Polish military for decades and had been pressed by the Soviets to take over leadership of the Party and the state to try to control Solidarity. His concern about Radio Free Europe centered on its potential impact on public opinion, and on what it reflected about the state of affairs in Poland itself. His regime established a new public opinion research center whose director had long worked with Jaruzelski. It also lodged a far higher number of diplomatic complaints with the American ambassador about Radio Free Europe, and about how Polish events were reported on Western radio stations. Jaruzelski's concern with public opinion, and with what was said about him and his regime, was focused on defending himself, systematizing and centralizing the media's responses to public concerns, and what he termed the foreign radios' "counter-propaganda."

Interviews with Jaruzelski's associates provided a very different evaluation of the First Secretary's approach to Western radio from that of Jaruzelski himself. Although he claimed not to have kept close track of RFE broadcasts, this claim ran counter to his detailed knowledge of what

⁴ This said, neither Kania nor Jaruzelski claimed that the Soviet Union ever made mention of RFE coverage or commentary: indeed, they and other interviewees all claimed that RFE and its coverage were not part of the discussions among top Soviet-bloc Party leaders. Documentary evidence from top-level multilateral Soviet Bloc meetings confirms this claim, while indicating that RFE was discussed at the level of joint meetings of interior ministers, e.g. the February 1976 Prague meeting of Soviet bloc interior ministry and intelligence service representatives. See Documents 21 and 22 in Part Six.

had been broadcast in this period, and also to reports from his subordinates as to how closely he reviewed Western radio broadcast transcripts. As head of the Polish military, he had obviously read these transcripts for decades. His press spokesman, Jerzy Urban, and others in his circle claimed that, as First Secretary of the PUWP, he read the transcripts of Radio Free Europe in detail, making notes asking, for instance, “Is this true?” “What is to be done about this?” and “Why was this said?” He then expected his subordinates to provide him with the information requested, and to investigate and solve the problem.

In his interview in 2002, however, he claimed to have seen RFE as an organ of the CIA, an instrument of subversion, and the voice of the Polish opposition. He claimed he had merely had summaries prepared for him, and had not read the entire transcripts. This perception of Radio Free Europe as an organ of the United States government making calculated comments on Poland and the Polish regime was exemplified in official, detailed complaints to the State Department. It was not, however, reflected in the regime’s internal response to this information, which was to use RFE as a reliable and valued resource on what was happening inside Poland.

Listening to RFE in the Elite

Interviewees from the Polish elite all agreed that Radio Free Europe was listened to by Party members and the population at large, especially the intelligentsia, even when it was heavily jammed by stations in Poland (until 1956) and by stations outside Poland (until November 1988). As evidence of this, a former censor said that, in the 1970s, he remembered an angry call from a Politburo member, about something he had heard on official radio, rebuking him for allowing such commentary to be broadcast. After the censors’ office had reviewed what had been broadcast and found no trace of the offending material, the Politburo member concluded that he must have heard RFE in the shower and failed to distinguish it from Polish radio.⁵ Polish elites from all eras and all levels, without exception, claimed that RFE was listened to by many people in the Party

⁵ Andrzej Matyniuk interview, 2002. Matyniuk was Censor for Radio and Cultural Institutions in the Main Office for Control of the Press, Publications, and Public Performances in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

elite and apparatus, as well as journalists, editors, and censors. In almost all cases, they claimed that these individuals cited RFE directly as their source only in times of political crisis: at other times, they used the information but did not admit to having obtained it directly from the broadcasts. In addition to their own use of RFE, all these people had families and friends who listened to or heard about RFE broadcasts, reported it to them, and challenged them on what was reported.

RFE broadcasts, the broadcasts of other Western stations transmitting to Poland, and Western press and broadcast media reports about Poland were all available in a variety of reprint publications, transcripts, and summaries that were made available to different groups in the wider elite.⁶ Beyond these internal publications, whose coverage was inversely related to the size of their circulation, top members of the elite and some editors with a “need to know” status were able to get *Kultura* (the leading émigré journal in the West) and other Western publications directly. In many cases, the leaders who received transcripts, *Kultura*, and Western publications often “rewarded” their subordinates by letting them read the “forbidden” Western media or the “classified” transcripts.

Interviewees differed in their memories of who prepared and distributed which kinds of internal publications. What is clear from all the interviewees is that there was a daily complete transcript of everything, except for musical programs and pure entertainment that was broadcast on Radio Free Europe. This was available to the top elite (numerical estimates ranged from 10 to 20). This elite included the members of the Politburo, heads of the Party press and ideology departments, the Minister of the Interior and others who were designated, for that administration, as needing to know. Most respondents said that this was done by a special department in the Interior Ministry. Some claimed that this was the “Institute of Western Affairs.”⁷ In addition, the Polish Press Agency or Interpress “Institute of East-West Relations” issued daily and weekly bulletins and analyses, one of which was “Poland in Western Eyes.” It included Western press reports and Western broadcasts into Poland. These reports were made at a number of levels and distributed to various audiences: the less political information there was, the larger the distribution. In general, PAP reports were available to propaganda specialists, editors, Party

⁶ See Document 13 in Part Six.

⁷ Jerzy Waszcuk interview, 2002.

instructors, Ministry of Interior and Foreign Affairs officials, and others who had connections to the top elite.⁸

The Party leadership was also focused on dealing with the impact of RFE. To this end, it supported the Center for Public Opinion Research (OBOP), which was a part of Polish Radio. From 1969 on, OBOP was regularly involved in surveying radio listeners on their use of Polish broadcast media and also Western media (primarily RFE). These studies were done on a regular basis with a stable panel of respondents, and special surveys were also carried out periodically, in response to specific elite concerns. They were distributed in numbers from 250 to 1, depending on who had requested them and what the results were. Questions were coded to get around people's fears.⁹ The Central Committee apparatus also got information about what Party members thought and knew from less direct sources such as local Party committee reports, letters to the Central Committee asking for interventions, and Ministry of Interior reports.¹⁰

In addition to this survey research organ, there was the Center for the Study of Propaganda that analyzed opposition and foreign materials for what they said, what their impact might be, and what their sources were or might have been. This Center, according to Jarema Maciszewski, was connected with the Interior Ministry. The Institute for the Study of Contemporary Problems of Capitalism in the Party school of Marxism-Leninism, and the Institute of Western Affairs also conducted analyses of Radio Free Europe's programs.¹¹

In the military, the Institute of Social Research of the Military Political Academy (WAP) was responsible for conducting political research on what media were sold, read, and heard, as well as how they were understood. The political section of the military and the Central Committee Department of Information (or, as it was later called, of Press and Propaganda) then detailed what the reaction to a given subject should be, and which specific media should react.

Interviewees agreed that, with few exceptions, the Central Committee departments dealing with information, press and propaganda, and ide-

⁸ See also Jane Leftwich Curry, *The Media and Intra-Elite Communication in Poland: The Role of "Special Bulletins"* (Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, December 1980, N/1514/4).

⁹ Joanna Sobczak interview, 2002

¹⁰ Waszczuk interview, 2002

¹¹ See Documents 10 and 11 in Part Six.

ology were the central institutions directing responses to RFE, although it is clear that directions came from a number of other direct and indirect sources, including the editors' sense of how they could use RFE to serve their own interests, or attack it to buttress their political position. In written directives, meetings of Party officials with editors and institution heads, and in private contacts, editors and Central Committee instructors were periodically told to publish articles attacking Radio Free Europe, or other Western media. Certain journals like *Żołnierz Wolności* (the military daily) were considered by the elite and media observers to be "dispositional journals" with the assigned target of attacking Radio Free Europe.

A Central Committee Secretariat document from 1984¹² laid out the process in detail, identifying many of these agencies and instruments, in an attempt to move toward a coordination of responses:

"The problems are central to the departments of Information as well as the Press, Radio, and Television of the Central Committee of the PUWP. From 1981, their main action was against the influence of oppositional propaganda intended to reduce the lack of faith in the party and the socialist government, and also to oppose their argumentation and demask their aims...

A number of institutions and government departments are involved in the organization and carrying out of counter propaganda. The Department of Information is responsible for systematically reviewing, analyzing, and predicting the subversive activations of our propaganda enemies (especially foreign radio stations transmitting Polish language broadcasts) as well as making recommendations as to how to counter the propaganda. In doing this, they have also used the work (periodic analysis on general issues or specific problems) of the Institute of Research on the Contemporary Problems of Capitalism and Office of Press Analysis.

...Based on this material [prepared in the Central Committee], the Department of Press, Radio, and Television of the Central Committee will prepare up to date directives on the presentation in the mass media of important matters for counterpropaganda... Editorial offices use this as source materials... Rich observations about counter-propaganda, mostly in the area of military affairs, are prepared by the [military's Po-

¹² Document 41 in Part Six.

litical Administration]... mostly for the use of the Party. Important roles in the fight against subversive propaganda are played by the Press Department, the government press spokesman and also "Interpress" work with foreign correspondents.

In their information and feature work, television and radio as well as "Trybuna Ludu," "Żołnierz Wolności," and some regional papers (Gdańsk and Wrocław) play special roles.

... In internal Party responses... daily telexed texts, material presented in Documentation Political, special prepared brochures, and other publications ... are valuable."¹³

Radio Free Europe: The Fifth Branch of Government?

Whatever the current leader's interest in Radio Free Europe and other Western broadcasts was, foreign broadcasts consistently fulfilled certain functions for the entire Polish political class. After 1976, they were considered to be the chief mode of "mass communication" for the opposition, whose underground journals reached far fewer people than RFE or other Western stations. Dissidents sent their material out, through various channels, to the BBC and RFE, both of whom had cultivated the opposition for years.

The elites made use of, or were affected by, RFE and Western stations in a number of other ways. For those interested in getting information published and in expanding the parameters of public discussion in the legal Polish media, Radio Free Europe and other Western broadcasts could be used as counter-examples and threats. Jaruzelski affirmed that, although RFE's broadcasts about the demonstrations in the Gdańsk shipyard forced the government to discuss the unrest more openly in the domestic media, he also used RFE broadcasts on the Katyn Massacre to press the Soviets to admit their guilt and open the archives on Katyn.¹⁴ A censor reported that RFE broadcasts (or the possibility that RFE would broadcast information on a cultural event, individual, or news event) were used by editors and sympathetic censors as the reason why comparable articles or broadcasts should be allowed in the legal Polish media. More than one interviewee claimed that RFE revelations on Polish cen-

¹³ Ibid., 1–3.

¹⁴ Wojciech Jaruzelski interview, 2002.

sorship, based on internal documents from the Kraków censorship office, resulted in censorship based on content rather than on author blacklists.¹⁵ Jerzy Urban and a number of Polish journalists claimed that “censorable material” was pushed through either by using an introduction attacking RFE or presenting it as a polemic with RFE.

In personal battles within the elite, Radio Free Europe was sometimes a useful tool. Individual leaders exploited the fact that positive reports about another leader had the effect of raising questions about the political loyalty and viability of that person. In cases where individuals had connections to RFE or other external channels, it was speculated that they fed positive information about their opponents to RFE as a weapon to reduce their adversaries’ standing in the political elite. Individuals whose actions were positively reported in RFE were subject to heated criticism in formal and informal Party meetings, if not worse. It would be foolhardy to claim that positive reporting on RFE was the direct cause of the demotion or ouster of any of the leaders, given the amount of information that circled in elite groups, and the fact that an action of some kind had to be the basis for any positive or negative portrayal, but it clearly played a role.

There were also instances where elites got information to RFE in the direct hope of changing outcomes or affecting competitors. The prime period when this occurred, according to several interviewees, was during the Party purges of 1968. According to Andrzej Czechowicz (a spy for Poland in RFE’s headquarters) among others, Party leaders Zenon Kliszko and Ignacy Loga-Sowiński were direct sources of information for RFE, though in one case it was deliberate and in the other inadvertent.

Kliszko was said to have made direct contact and knowingly passed on some information. Loga-Sowiński was a source simply because his ex-wife, married to the Polish ambassador to the United Kingdom, would converse with him when she returned to Poland and then go back to England and share the information. That information then found its way to RFE. Radio Free Europe was not the only Western source the leaders used. At least one respondent claimed that, in the 1970s, Władysław Gomułka, Roman Zambrowski, and Zenon Kliszko deliberately fed information to the *Le Monde* correspondent in Warsaw. It was also said that,

¹⁵ The documents are available in English in Jane L. Curry, *The Black Book of Polish Censorship* (Random House and Vintage Press, 1984).

after Gomułka had retired and had his own article censored, he threatened to take it to *Kultura*.¹⁶

Radio Free Europe was sometimes an even more direct player in events in Poland. Some interviewees, like Jerzy Urban (press spokesman for the government in the 1980s), claimed that, when RFE predicted a government action, the result was frequently that it would be delayed or cancelled, to prevent RFE gaining more credibility. This allowed dissenters within the government, and those outside with good ties, to have an impact on low-level decisions. A number of respondents claimed that RFE's broadcasts on the 1967 Middle East War, the 1968 student unrest and intra-Party conflict in Poland, and the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia had a direct impact on events. In the case of the March 1968 events in Poland, the broadcasts were said to have created an atmosphere in which Party officials expected Gomułka to resign. When he did not resign for another two years, it left even Gomułka loyalists feeling embattled and unsure. One interviewee cited the shock waves that went through the Party apparatus when RFE broadcast information about corruption among Party leaders in the 1970s. (That said, there was another interpretation of the impact of this series: Jerzy Wiatr, a sociologist who was in close contact with top Party elites, said that the revelation of this information and the lack of any subsequent cleansing of the Party encouraged local leaders to continue in their corruption since there had been no response to higher-level officials' corruption.)

Despite the numerous cases when RFE broadcasts affected specific government actions, broadcasting had little or no impact on most major decisions. One respondent termed it a "game:" what RFE might do was explicitly or implicitly taken into consideration. But, when the decision was thought to be critical for internal stability, for the position of the Communist rulers, or for international "safety," the decision was made and carried out with little or no reference to RFE's putative response. RFE's attacks were givens that did not override the elite's sense it had to act. For instance, RFE's reaction was not taken into account in planning for martial law in 1981, although some interviewees said that concern about martial law was heightened by the sense that RFE might call for general strikes and other violent actions that would go well beyond what the opposition itself would dare to demand.¹⁷ Similarly, RFE's potential

¹⁶ Stanisław Kurz interview, 2002.

¹⁷ Czesław Kiszczak interview, 2004.

response was not part of the calculations behind the government's decision to increase prices in 1970 and 1980, nor in governmental responses to the popular upheavals that followed.

RFE made it easier for opponents of communism to communicate with the population. In the 1980s, it was treated by the regime as the opposition's "agent." Of course, it was not the only avenue for criticism and pressure against the Communist top elite: highly critical attacks were made by intellectuals inside and outside the Party apparatus, especially in times of crisis. In the mid-1970s, and at other times, interviewees noted that cultural groups were "a hundred times" more critical than RFE when they met with politicians. What RFE did was provide a more public channel for criticism. Instead of relying on what were occasional, and often closed, meetings with leaders, the dissidents would give messages to correspondents to be passed on to RFE. In later years, they called in their reports directly to RFE offices outside Poland. This broadened the audience to dissident messages, and gave the criticisms more weight. All of the interviewees who had been active in the late 1970s and 1980s stated without exception that RFE had been used by the main Polish dissident group, KOR, to get out its message to a broader constituency. Use of RFE allowed opposition groups to reach a wider audience than was possible with homemade printing presses, and gave greater credibility and immediacy to their communications. Czesław Kiszczak, Minister of Interior in the 1980s, went further. He made the claim that RFE had actually called for demonstrations, independently of what the dissidents had planned.¹⁸

The other organization that was seen by these Party elites (particularly those from the 1970s and 1980s when criticism was more open) as using RFE to get its message out was the Catholic Church. If the Church contacted RFE, it could get its message out avoiding Party and governmental restrictions. According to the two officials who headed the government Office of Religious Affairs from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s,¹⁹ the Church most often did not ask, it merely sent out information to Radio Free Europe with the expectation that it would be broadcast.

In these internal political events, RFE and other Western media were cited by former elites as being forces that generally influenced the will-

¹⁸ Kiszczak also claimed that RFE actually took the initiative of calling for demonstrations, and challenging the police to respond, during martial law. There is no case of this in the recordings of the broadcasts in this period.

¹⁹ Kazimierz Kąkol and Adam Lopatka interviews, 2002

ingness of the players to negotiate. So, although Jaruzelski and others claimed that RFE's "frantic" support of Solidarity after the imposition of martial law made it more difficult for them "to get to the table," it was also maintained that RFE's publicity for the moderates helped facilitate the 1989 Roundtable and other earlier negotiations.

How Did the Regime Respond?

In their responses to RFE, the Polish elites had a variety of targets and goals.

Their responses depended on the prevailing approaches to dissent and foreign relations, the need to respect the balance between rewarding the population with goods and repressing it, and the responses of individuals or groups, and the nature of their messages.

Blocking access was the most obvious response. Arresting people caught with RFE pamphlets and jamming the Radio's broadcasts were standard responses in the pre-1956 period. Although Party officials were not supposed to listen to RFE, and Władysław Matwin (a member of the Politburo in 1956) said that they did not, it was clear that enough people listened to RFE and felt comfortable using it by 1954, when the Józef Światło broadcasts became instant word-of-mouth news in Warsaw's political and social circles. Clearly, in 1955 and 1956, there was no attempt to punish listenership to RFE.

After Gomulka came to power, jamming inside Poland was dropped, since he did not see it as useful or cost-effective. Soviet-based jamming continued, though it was less effective. In this period, there was little hope of controlling the population's use of RFE. Instead, spying on RFE became a major elite ploy, and, at the same time, transcribing of the broadcasts began.

Spying on RFE and its extended network was carried on for a number of purposes, some consistent throughout the Communist era and others specific to a given period. The goals of spying were to identify where RFE got its information, what dissidents and party elites were passing information on to RFE, what the source and direction of policy was for RFE, and how to compromise its employees and broadcasts.

In the case of persons interviewed by the Interior Ministry when they traveled to the West, the information gathered was of little significance. So many people were involved that the records could not be kept up to

date, and it was impossible to punish anyone. In the case of high-ranking officials who were thought to have leaked or deliberately passed on information, the indiscretion could result in the loss of their position. When members of the opposition movement were involved in passing information to RFE—a common occurrence in the period 1976–1989 when intellectual dissident groups like KOR were very active—the regime gradually shifted from regarding this as criminal behavior to assuming it would happen, and merely trying to keep track of what was said by who to whom from tapping their telephones. But even when there was a tendency to regard spreading information as “criminal,” dissidents did so much else that was illegal that they were not punished explicitly for giving information to RFE or other Western channels. When their connection with RFE was attacked in the press, the tactic was, according to Kiszczak, intended not just to condemn dissidents but also to discourage others from spreading information or giving out sensitive information over the telephone or in small gatherings. Much of the bugging had an impact, although the government never really reviewed what had been taped. They knew that people censored themselves when they thought their conversations were being recorded. It was generally better to have information flowing than not to know what was being planned or being said.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, when Andrzej Czechowicz was recruited and installed in RFE as an undercover spy, his main assignment was to discredit RFE and its staff. Much of his effort, Czechowicz said in interviews, was focused on Jan Nowak-Jeziorański, the head of the Polish broadcasting section, and a powerful actor in émigré politics. Czechowicz was involved in monitoring where information came from, and collecting information from disaffected staff members and the émigré community. His activities also involved threatening and compromising RFE staff members so they could be blackmailed for information. According to Czechowicz, he was recalled to Warsaw in 1971 to produce a book²⁰ on his experiences in RFE aimed at distracting attention from tensions over price increases and the December 1970 events in Gdańsk.

Finally, although there is little direct information on this, interviewees suggested, without providing clear examples, that there were attempts to feed misinformation to RFE so that it could be attacked and discredited.

²⁰ Andrzej Czechowicz, *Kapitan Andrzej Czechowicz Wyconal Zadanie* (Warsaw, 1972). See additional discussion of Czechowicz’ publications and testimony in Chapter Nine.

ed. These activities were carried on in both the Interior Ministry (Institute of East-West Relations²¹ and its 2nd division) and the Defense Ministry. The two were not coordinated but were used to compete and check on each other with parallel lines of spying and analysis.

RFE was attacked directly by the media, and by the government or Party. At the Institute of Journalism in the 1960s, an entire course was devoted to counter-propaganda. A number of RFE scripts were used as texts for this course and students were taught by the dean, Kazimierz Kąkol (known for his editorship of *Prawo i Życie* and his participation in the anti-Semitic campaigns of 1968, as well as for his writing on counter-propaganda). They were given the RFE transcripts to teach them what and how to write against the Radio.

In the 1970s and 1980s, a battle raged within the top elite over the utility of publishing attacks on RFE in national journals such as *Żołnierz Wolności* and other more liberal journals. Some journalist-editors like Mieczysław Rakowski,²² maintained that it was counterproductive for domestic media to target RFE since it merely strengthened RFE's credibility with its audience. In spite of this, the attacks were continued.

The final strategy to diminish the impact of RFE came from Jerzy Urban. He instituted news conferences for a mix of foreign correspondents and Polish journalists and allowed topics normally prohibited in legal Polish media to be raised for discussion, not only at the news conference but also later when the proceedings were aired on television. He also responded directly to RFE broadcasts by claiming their charges were incorrect and providing alternative "facts." Finally, at the end of the 1980s, he offered to meet and debate with the management at RFE on the ending of jamming of RFE, and RFE's attacks on the Polish elite and its policy. All this was intended to diminish RFE's aura of forbidden fruit, and make it a less interesting player in Polish politics.

Elite Evaluations of RFE

Responses of former Polish regime officials to questions about RFE, even in the course of the same interview, ranged from the stock response that it was an agent of the CIA to clear acknowledgements of its veracity on

²¹ Mieczysław Rakowski interview, 2002.

²² Ibid.

many subjects. Although assessments of RFE's veracity and moderation varied according to period, overall perceptions were basically the same. The media attacks on RFE's truthfulness that appeared regularly in the military and conservative press, and more sporadically in other organs, were not proportional to the influence it was perceived by the leaders as wielding at any given period. Interviewees from the elite maintained that RFE was less widely heard and less influential on a daily basis than in moments of crisis, and that RFE did not really change the views of the bulk of the working and peasant classes, even when they listened to it. As General Szaciło, the head of the Political Administration of the Polish military from the 1960s through the 1980s, pointed out, the attacks in *Żołnierz Wolności* did not reflect concern about listening to RFE in the military. Lower-level soldiers in barracks could not hear RFE safely on base, which meant that few heard it while they were serving.²³ Despite the criticisms of martial law broadcast by RFE and other Western stations, no one refused to serve or to follow orders in the martial law period.

Elite respondents, on the whole, saw RFE as playing a significant role when the system was in crisis: helping to trigger a "crisis in the making" with Józef Światło's allegations; influencing the expectations of the intelligentsia and Party members as to what should come next in the crisis of 1968; emboldening different forces in the opposition or political elite, and discouraging or marginalizing others. Most claimed that RFE's listenership, in all parts of society and to all kinds of broadcasts, was produced by a sense of crisis, or the worsening of economic conditions. Most interviewees admitted that people listened because RFE was the only source of information, or the only one they trusted, concerning what was assumed to be sensitive material.

RFE was not the only Western news source for either elite respondents or the overall population. They all claimed to have been aware of, and users of, a variety of foreign stations broadcasting in Polish or other languages. These ranged from Radio Tirana and Radio Moscow (considered the least credible, although the broadcasts were systematically transcribed, and the transcripts of Radio Moscow were distributed to the elite) to the more credible BBC, Deutsche Welle, and VOA. Depending on their personal connections, their positions, or their need-to-know for

²³ Yet polls conducted by Szaciło's Political Administration, cited in Chapter Seven, indicated significant listenership within the military.

professional purposes, the Polish elites also had access to Western periodicals (including Polish émigré journals like *Kultura*), and to summaries or translations of all the articles on Poland put out by Interpress and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. These were important for three reasons: they provided alternative information that was not available in the “censored” press, they validated information in the Polish press or internal elite media, and they shed light on Western stances on international and Polish issues. All the interviewees for the post-1956 period alluded to these three factors.

The elites’ understanding of and reaction to RFE’s messages was also determined by their sense of how RFE was controlled. Most interviewees stated automatically that RFE was an agency of the CIA. Those who worked for the regime in the late 1970s and 1980s saw it as the product of American and German inspiration colored by émigré politics and interests. For them, this explained why it was so accurate on specific events, how it managed to target exactly what concerned Poles, and why it was so “hysterical” (as they described it) in periods following major upheavals. Many interviewees claimed that some reports broadcast by RFE were not true.

No interviewee stated that RFE was the best of the Western stations, although some clearly felt that its broadcast revelations concerning events or people in Poland had the greatest impact, particularly during crises, or immediately preceding them. Most ranked the veracity and objectivity of the BBC above that of RFE. For them, the BBC (along with *Kultura* and other Western periodicals) was a far more significant source of information about the world. Their assessments of the Voice of America tended to marginalize the station as the voice of American culture and American-government versions of the news.

In terms of the “politics” of RFE, opinions varied, depending on the period when the interviewee formed part of the top elite. There was a universal perception that RFE had played a positive role in putting the issue of secret police power on the table by broadcasting Światło’s revelations, and that it had continued on the same track with Khrushchev’s Secret Speech and Gomułka’s first speech to the Party in October 1956.

Interviewees were also clear that RFE had shown a moderate degree of support for Gomułka in the period following the Polish October, which had made it easier for him to take control and tamp down Soviet anxiety, yet had refrained from giving him the all-out support that would have allowed the Soviet elite to raise the threat of Poland going over to the West,

or Gomułka being an agent of the West, when they came to Poland to try and block Gomułka taking over as First Secretary of the PUWP.

Most interviewees felt RFE played a more complex role at the time of the 1968 events, i.e., the anti-Semitic campaign against Jews in the Party by the Partisan group around Interior Minister Mieczysław Moczar; the street battles over the closing of a nationalist production of the traditional play, *Dziady*; and the invasion of Czechoslovakia. Respondents felt that RFE was, for the first time, explicitly involved in the elites' internal battles. The sense was that Moczar forces used information, and disinformation, about others in the elite to strengthen their press campaign. At the same time, RFE heightened intellectual protest by putting out the word that *Dziady* would be closed before the public announcement, which meant that the intellectual community was ready to react.

In the post-1976 period, respondents' reviews of RFE become more mixed. After the riots and demonstrations in Radom and Ursus, interviewees clearly detected a change in RFE's position. They evoked RFE's "furious attacks" on price increases and government policy. With the formation of KOR and other organized dissident groups, respondents saw RFE as becoming far more militant. They felt that it served as a "tuba" for the dissidents and the Catholic Church. At a time when the elite was particularly sensitive to Western pressures and internal opposition in the face of a failing economy, the interviewees' general conclusion was that RFE exacerbated tensions and created conflicts. But at the end of the 1980s, many saw RFE as playing a moderating role that facilitated the Roundtable by strengthening the moderate opposition and the moderates within the Party.

RFE as a Political Force

The role of RFE in elite-level politics was a complex one. Clearly, Party officials and leaders knew and cared what RFE broadcast. Their interest was heightened when they had the sense the population was against them, but this interest was not the result of RFE's reach inside Poland. No one saw RFE as a primary source of information for average Poles. All the interviewees ascribed RFE's strength to the weaknesses of the Polish system: its economic failings, its political divisions, and the lack of critical, accurate and useful information in the Polish media. Yet, during most of the Communist period, their response to RFE was to attack it explicitly in

government media, and to expand the limits occasionally (and most often temporarily) of what could be reported. Although the credibility of government media was clearly worn away by RFE and other outside sources, as could be seen on the streets and in the homes of Poland, the government media system of censorship and direction remained unchanged in all but times of real street crisis.

For politicians, RFE was the “Elephant in the Living Room” influencing their decisions and reactions. RFE’s existence was the proof that Poles did not believe in the system’s rhetoric, that some of them were sufficiently well placed to obtain accurate information, and that they were not afraid to pass on the information to the station. The nature of the stories allowed the elites to see what issues were of concern to the people they were trying to rule. They clearly assumed that the broadcasts penetrated far more deeply into society through word of mouth. They also assumed that, even if people did not listen, what RFE said was an important reflection of what was happening in the state and in society, and this knowledge supplemented the intelligence reports generated by their own agencies.

The top elites’ approach to RFE indicated they knew that their own propaganda and intelligence on internal and external affairs were not fully trustworthy. This conformed to their normal pattern of information use. From the start of their rule, Communist elites, in Poland and elsewhere, set up parallel but separate channels of information, one to check on the other, so that they were not dependent on any one source. Assuming that they could not fully trust their own elites and those who claimed allegiance to the system, they set traps to check on them. What Radio Free Europe said was, in their eyes, an important measure of who was on their side and who was not. They were also concerned, particularly after the Gomulka era, about what the West thought, what its plans or positions were on Eastern Europe, and what it might say that would concern others in the Soviet bloc. Their assumption that RFE was CIA-funded only heightened its significance.²⁴ In the end, though, all these different perceptions and needs got mixed together in their daily contact with RFE.

In major decisions, such as the declaration of martial law and price increases, the question of how RFE would respond was seen by the elites as a problem, but it was not a factor in the decision-making process. In

²⁴ Notwithstanding the end of CIA involvement, open funding, and oversight of RFE by the US Congress after 1971. See Document 12 in Part Six.

lower-level decisions, RFE was viewed as one of the many forces weighing on Polish politics. On some occasions, it was used as a vehicle to get messages out, or influence policy. On others, it was a source of information, or a way of bolstering an argument for or against a specific policy or act. At all times, it was something to be discussed, a factor to take into account, usually without citing it directly or publicly.

Had RFE not existed, the elite probably would have gravitated to other sources to find out what the opposition was doing, and what the outside world thought and said. After all, they had networks of internal and external intelligence and other Western sources. Most, I suspect, saw RFE as a foreign organ functioning in its own institutional interest, as they assumed their own media and intelligence agencies did. What RFE did was set off alarm signals and highlight issues, framing the elite's decisions, and serving as another, though unacknowledged, force in their decision-making process. Usually this resulted in greater openness in domestic politics but, in some critical cases, RFE's attacks were so strong that they weakened the elites' reformist impulses, and resulted in at least temporary increases in repression and refusals to negotiate.

What the role of RFE illuminates overall is the lack of trust that Communist leaders felt in their own populations and agencies. They created intricate networks of alternative sources of information, and included RFE and other Western media in their networks because they trusted no single source to be accurate. In the process, the top elite turned against itself and turned away from criticism. But it was not completely cut off from society. All the interviewees knew how unpopular their regime had been. This awareness came from personal contacts, from the realization that the economy and social system did not work as the ideology had promised, and from their knowledge of what was said about Poland and the Soviet bloc in the outside world. These were men who were seeking for ways to defend what they saw as Poland's (and their own) interests but were caught in the parameters of what they thought the Soviet Union would allow, and what they thought they could do without losing control of a hostile population. RFE, as an alternative information source, encouraged them to be more open and liberal, but it was not enough of a counter-force to trigger a systemic change in media control or governance. It was a "necessary but not sufficient" force that prevented Polish political control from taking hold and becoming truly effective, and in the end it led to the demise of Communist rule in Poland and, months later, in the rest of the Soviet bloc.

CHAPTER 9

Polish Regime Countermeasures against Radio Free Europe

PAWEŁ MACHCEWICZ

Over more than four decades of existence, the Communist system in Poland underwent a significant evolution, but throughout the period, from the beginning of the 1950s until the end of the 1980s, one of the permanent enemies of the system was Radio Free Europe. The regime fought the Radio by a variety of methods: propaganda attacks, jamming of broadcasts, repressive measures against those in Poland who cooperated with the Radio (or, in the Stalinist period, merely listened to it), operational measures by intelligence services trying to penetrate the Munich team, recruitment of agents inside the team, triggering of internal conflicts, and discrediting people who were particularly important to the station.

This chapter outlines the decades-long fight against Radio Free Europe. Special attention is paid to the activities of the security apparatus, whose documents have only recently been made available to historians in the archive of the Institute of National Remembrance.¹

The Stalinist Era: 1950–1956

Radio Free Europe started to broadcast Polish programs—initially only half an hour a day—on August 4, 1950. In the first two years, programs were prepared by a small team in New York and then broadcast by a weak transmitter in Western Germany. It was only when broadcasting from Munich was inaugurated (May 1952), much stronger transmitters in Germany and Portugal were utilized, the editorial team grew in num-

¹ A fuller discussion and documentation is contained in Paweł Machcewicz, *“Monachijska menażeria”, walka z Radiem Wolna Europa* (Warsaw: Institute of National Remembrance and Institute of Political Studies, 2007).

bers, and the broadcasting time increased that it became possible to reach listeners in Poland on a mass scale.² In the beginning, the Communist regime in Warsaw and probably also most listeners in Poland viewed Radio Free Europe as just one more station broadcasting from the West in the Polish language, along with the BBC, Voice of America, Radio Paris, and Radio Madrid. RFE gradually attained a leading position, competing on the one hand with the BBC, which had been very popular during World War II, and on the other hand with the strongly anti-Communist Radio Madrid, a radio station managed by Poles, which was subordinate to the London-based government-in-exile.³

The first steps taken by the regime against Radio Free Europe will be discussed conjointly with measures against other foreign broadcasting stations.

Jamming. One of the most important countermeasures was radio jamming, initiated by the Soviet Union. In September 1951, A. Zharov, head of the USSR Central Board of Radio Communications, ordered the creation of a jamming system covering the entire territory of Poland based on cooperation between the USSR and other countries of the Soviet bloc. In an analysis prepared by Zharov, Radio Free Europe was ranked ninth after other broadcasting stations, although it was linked with Voice of America and Radio Madrid as having “a particularly hostile character.” According to Zharov’s memorandum, the USSR began jamming of broadcasts to Poland in July 1950 but the system proved to be inadequate since it covered only a small number of radio frequencies. Zharov outlined a detailed plan for the jamming of foreign broadcasts, on shortwave by transmitters on USSR territory, and on medium wave by transmitters in Poland, produced and used in accordance with Soviet instructions. The Polish transmitters were also supposed to be used “to protect some regions of the USSR from anti-Soviet broadcasts.”⁴ On October 24, 1951, the USSR Council of

² For the beginnings of the Polish section of Radio Free Europe, see Jan Nowak-Jeziorański, *Wojna w eterze. Wspomnienia. Tom I 1948–1956* (London: Odnova, 1986), 25–44; and Paweł Machcewicz, *Emigracja w polityce międzynarodowej* (Warsaw: Biblioteka Więzi, 1999), 56–64.

³ Machcewicz, *Emigracja*, op.cit., 64–65.

⁴ “Raport szefa Głównego Zarządu Łączności Radiowej A. Żarowa dla ministra łączności ZSRS Nikołaja Psurcewa o audycjach Głosu Ameryki i Radia Wolna Europa nadawanych na Polskę i utworzeniu systemu ich zakłócania, 15 września 1951,” in *Polska w dokumentach z archiwów rosyjskich 1949–1953*

Ministers adopted a resolution ordering the Soviet Ministry of Communication to organize, as of December 1, 1951, jamming of “hostile radio propaganda on the territory of Poland,” on shortwave from transmitters in the USSR, on medium wave from the territory of Poland, which was to receive “support in organising protection against hostile radio propaganda” while using its own technical means. For this purpose, Zharov together with a group of “experienced specialists” were seconded to Poland for three months to “provide help in organising protection.”⁵ The so-called “BO” service (full designation unknown) was established on December 24, 1951 by a decision of the Polish Minister of Public Security.⁶

In addition to the USSR, Czechoslovakia and Hungary participated in jamming broadcasts in the Polish language on shortwave. Meanwhile jamming emanating from Polish territory targeted broadcasts to the USSR (in the Russian, Lithuanian and Georgian languages), Czechoslovakia, and Hungary.⁷ “Protection” on medium wave was carried out via a continuously extended network of stationary centers (K points) equipped with jamming transmitters. Most transmitters were intended for “far-reaching protection” covering the whole country. In centers with a high density of radio listeners and in particularly important areas, they were supplemented by local transmitters. Along with stationary devices, portable transmitters placed on cars were used after June 1953.

Development of the jamming network progressed rapidly. In December 1951, there were nine transmitters in Poland, with a total power of 62 kW, working for less than eight hours a day. In August 1953, there were 29 transmitters (an increase of 223%) with a power of 355 kW (increase of 472%), working for 468 hours a day (60-fold increase). The scale of the “hostile radio propaganda” had also significantly increased: from 45.5

(Warsaw: Instytut Studiów Politycznych PAN, 2000), 122–125. See Document 43 in Part Six.

⁵ Ibid., 126–127.

⁶ Organizational Command no. 0171 of the Minister of Public Security establishing the BO service and K points (equipped with jamming machinery), dated January 17, 1955. BO service was transformed into the Department of Detached Communications of the MSW, and on March 15, 1955 into the Board of Detached Radio Communication of the MSW. It was liquidated on December 14, 1956. See Aleksander Kochański, *Polska 1944–1991. Informator historyczny. Volume I*, (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, 1996), 418.

⁷ Archive of the Institute of National Remembrance (AIPN), MBP 1490. This file contains documents from the BO service for the years 1952–1953. No material is available for subsequent years.

hours of daily broadcasting in the Polish language in December 1951 to 198 hours in August 1953; during the same period, the number of frequencies used increased (from 12 to 40) as well as the transmitter power applied. Moreover, in 1953, the “opponent” started to apply the “tactics of concentration of a substantial part of its resources for different countries at different times,” which of course impeded counteraction.⁸

The top Polish regime officials were interested in jamming. In a letter addressed to PUWP [Polish United Workers’ Party] First Secretary Bolesław Bierut, Politburo member Jakub Berman mentioned increasing the efficiency of jamming as one of the key measures during the campaign before elections to the Polish parliament in October 1952.⁹ Berman also discussed the issue of jamming in a conversation with Soviet ambassador A.A. Sobolev in May 1952. He asked the Soviet Union to send a specialist (the aforementioned Zharov or somebody from his circle), because Poland lacked competent specialists. According to Berman, the audibility of the “hostile” radio stations had recently improved and, on top of this, on May 3, a new broadcasting station [RFE from Munich] had started to broadcast on shortwave, which was particularly alarming in the context of the forthcoming elections to the parliament.¹⁰ It is also known that Bierut discussed the “fight against hostile propaganda” during a meeting with the Soviet leadership in Moscow in July 1953.¹¹

The jamming system went on growing as détente emerged in the Soviet bloc after Stalin’s death in 1953, and after the liquidation of the Ministry of Public Security (MBP) in Poland in December 1954. In September 1955, as many as 249 transmitters with a total power of 1766 kW operated in Poland (sevenfold increase within two years). According to the estimates of Andrzej Paczkowski, jamming in 1955 probably consumed more power in Poland than actual transmitting.¹²

⁸ Memorandum, AIPN, MBP 1490, August 19, 1953, 179–180.

⁹ Andrzej Paczkowski, “Jedni słuchali, inni zagłuszali,” *Rzeczpospolita*, May 9–10, 1992.

¹⁰ Iz dziennika A.A. Soboliewa. Zapis biesiedy z J. Biermanom o dzieńnozi kompensacji ukraińskim pierieseliencom i komandirowanii w Polsce sowietskowo specjalista po radiozaszczitie, May 3, 1952 in *Sowietskij Faktor w Wostocznoj Jewropie 1944–1953, t. 2 1949–1953. Dokumenty*, Riedakcjon-naja kolegija toma: T.W. Wołokitina, G.Pl. Muraszko, O.W. Naumow, A.F. Noskowa, T.W. Carewskaja, Moscow 2002, 620–621.

¹¹ A. Paczkowski, *Jedni słuchali, inni zagłuszali*, op.cit.

¹² Ibid.

The key question here, of course, is jamming efficiency. Detailed analyses per ten-day period were prepared by the Ministry of Public Security, broken down by individual broadcasting stations, frequency range, broadcasting hours and regions of the country. In March 1953, it was estimated that the “approximate efficiency of protection (both ours and of our friends) amounts to about 82% all over the country, whereas in Warsaw and Silesia (mainly the Stalinogród region) this efficiency reaches 97% to 99%. It pertains to all the broadcasts except Free Europe, in the case of which, in some regions of the country, this efficiency amounts to about 60% (mainly due to long broadcasting time—lasting for 8 to 16 hours).”¹³ From February 1953, jamming efficiency for RFE was presented separately in the ten-day period analyses, whereas all the other broadcasting stations were grouped, which confirms the fact that within less than a year after the commencement of Polish broadcasts from Munich, the Voice of Free Poland was already viewed by Polish authorities as the main opponent.

The data quoted on jamming efficiency are probably overstated. In November 1953, the Director of the BO Service, Lt. Col. Anatol Jegliński, admitted it himself by modifying the method for the preparation of ten-day reports.¹⁴ In the reports prepared in the later period, a drop in jamming efficiency of a couple of percentage points was apparent. It should also be kept in mind that the figures presented are global ones. In fact, there were differences—sometimes very substantial ones—between different regions of the country, broadcasting hours, and frequency range. For instance, according to data from the end of March 1953, RFE broadcasts between 4.54 a.m. and 9.15 a.m. were being successfully jammed in most frequency ranges at a rate of 60%, whereas between 8.00 p.m. and 2.00 a.m. in some frequency ranges the efficiency of jamming only amounted to 45%. Audience ratings were highest at these hours, before and after most Poles went to work. Much better jamming results, ranging from 80% to 95%, were achieved in the middle of the day (between 12.00 and 3.00 p.m.), but it was a time of day when working people were unlikely to spend time listening to radio receivers.¹⁵ As a rule, big cities were much better “covered” than small towns and rural areas.

¹³ “Memorandum about the growth in hostile propaganda from 1950 till now,” AIPN, MBP 1490, March 1953, 51.

¹⁴ “Work [jamming] efficiency in the ten-day period October 1–10, 1953,” *ibid.*, 246.

¹⁵ “Work [jamming] efficiency of ‘Free Europe’ for the ten-day period March 21–31, 1953,” *ibid.*, 78. The data concern protection assessed as good, i.e. making reception totally impossible.

Since it proved impossible to jam foreign broadcasts completely (or prevent their reception by reducing the frequency range of radios produced after 1954), another method of fighting against the influence of foreign broadcasting stations was repressive measures against listeners. The security apparatus was primarily concerned with collective listening to “hostile broadcasting stations,” whether at home with neighbors or friends or, of course, at work. A particularly serious crime was airing the programs of foreign radio stations via company wire-broadcasting centers, by tuning the devices to the “hostile” frequency range. This was treated as “counterrevolutionary” activity, conducted or inspired by “imperialist” agents. Repressive measures were also instituted against people commenting on news from foreign broadcasts, or passing them on to other people. Most people accused of collective listening to radio were sentenced to several months (usually 18–24 months) in a labor camp by the Special Committee for Fighting against Corrupt Practices and Economic Sabotage. In the years 1950–1954, about 4400 people were sent to labor camps for spreading “hostile propaganda.” It is unknown what percentage of the prisoners—doubtless a considerable one—was represented by people listening to Western radio or spreading news from that source.¹⁶

Impact of Światło's Broadcasts. RFE's greatest direct impact on the situation in Poland probably occurred in connection with broadcasts by Lt. Col. Józef Światło, who defected to the West in late 1953. Światło was one of the best-informed security officers; he was Deputy Director of Department X of the MBP, responsible for supervising Party staff members. He participated in many important operations (e.g. the arrests of Władysław Gomułka in August 1951 and Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński in September 1953).¹⁷ Programs based on Światło's revelations were launched in October 1954 and continued daily for many months. The broadcasts covered the criminal methods of the internal security forces, the role of Soviet advisors, and the lavish lifestyle of the Communist elite. They proved to be political dynamite and probably accelerated Poland's departure from Stalinism.

¹⁶ *Komisja Specjalna do Walki z Nadużyciami i Szkodnictwem Gospodarczym 1945–1950: Wybór dokumentów*, ed. Dariusz Jarosz and Tadeusz Wolsza, Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu (Warsaw: 1995), 9.

¹⁷ A. Paczkowski, “Trzy twarze Józefa Światła,” *Rzeczpospolita*, December 20–21, 2003; Andrzej Paczkowski. *Trzy Twarze Jozefa Swiatly* (Warsaw, 2009).

The impact of the Światło broadcasts was documented in a special bulletin prepared in the office of the Minister of Public Security. The bulletin documented cases of security service informers and agents who were refusing to go on cooperating, since after Światło's defection they were afraid of being exposed. "According to WUBP (Voivodship Office of Public Security), in Wrocław, since October 1, 10 agents who came, (among them 5 Catholic priests), were intimidated by the above fact, asking for a guarantee that Światło does not know about their cooperation and has not passed on data about their contacts with the public security organs," read the first note prepared after the launch of Światło's broadcasts.¹⁸

Światło's broadcasts on RFE were listened to even by security department officers, even in their offices, where some of them discussed the fugitive's revelations (e.g. in the room of the Deputy Head of the Town Security Office in Zakopane).¹⁹ Having consulted Moscow (Bierut talked on the phone with Prime Minister Malenkov), the Party leadership was forced to make quick decisions to offset at least partially the impact of Światło's broadcasts. Col. Jacek Różański, director of the MBP's Investigation Department, was arrested on charges of applying particularly brutal investigation methods, Światło's superior, Col. Anatol Fejgin, was arrested, and finally Minister Radkiewicz was dismissed, and the Ministry of Public Security was liquidated and divided into the Committee of Public Security and the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MSW).²⁰

The events of 1956. The upheaval of 1956 was an important turning point for both RFE and Poland. As early as June of that year, during workers' demonstrations in Poznań, the crowd destroyed equipment used for jamming foreign broadcasts that was located on the roof of one of the offices. While the equipment was being thrown down on to the street, the demonstrators chanted: "We want freedom," "They'll stop buzzing at last," "We want to listen to foreign countries without jamming."²¹ In October 1956, the demand to cease jamming was put forward at numerous

¹⁸ Memorandum No. 1 on Światło's defection, AIPN, 0298/571, volume 2, October 5, 1954.

¹⁹ Memorandum No. 2 on repercussions of Światło's defection, *ibid*, October 6, 1954.

²⁰ *Aparat bezpieczeństwa w Polsce w latach 1953–1954: Taktyka, strategia, metody*, ed. Grzegorz Majchrzak and A. Paczkowski (Warsaw, 2004), 22–26.

²¹ P. Machcewicz, "Polski rok 1956, Oficyna Wydawnicza," *Mówią Wieki*, Warsaw, 1993, 90.

rallies and demonstrations, and included in resolutions adopted in work places.²² Under the pressure of these demands, on October 26, the Politburo decided to continue jamming only of “broadcasting stations, whose programs are clearly slanderous and hostile towards Poland and intended to spread confusion. This mainly pertains to the broadcasts of ‘Free Europe.’”²³ This meant ending jamming of the Voice of America, since jamming of Radio Paris and of most BBC broadcasts had been halted already in 1955.²⁴ Publication of this decision was delayed and a press statement was published only on November 25. Prior to this date, on November 18, during a demonstration in Bydgoszcz, the crowd destroyed and set on fire jamming equipment.²⁵ It was probably this event that made the authorities take the decision to cease jamming all broadcasting stations, including RFE. On December 14, 1956, the Minister of the Interior issued an order to “cease radio protection in Poland,” and the Board of Detached Radio Communications of the MSW was liquidated.²⁶ Jamming of RFE Polish broadcasts did not stop in the USSR and Czechoslovakia, but it was less efficient without the Polish equipment.

Poland Under Gomułka: 1956–1970

Following the October upheaval, the activities of the security apparatus were considerably weakened as a result of strong public criticism of its coercive methods, liquidation of the Public Security Committee and local Security Offices (the Security Service, Służba Bezpieczeństwa, that took their place was a part of the MSW), and the dismissal of more than 9,000 functionaries (nearly 40% of the total in September 1956).²⁷

²² Ibid., 164–166.

²³ Antoni Dudek, Aleksander Kochański, Krzysztof Persak, eds., *Centrum władzy: Protokoły posiedzeń kierownictwa PZPR wybór z lata 1949–1970* (Warsaw: Instytut Studiów Politycznych PAN: 2000), 224.

²⁴ Memo for the members of Politburo of the PUWP concerning jamming, Central Archive of Modern Records, Polish State Archives (AAN), PZPR, 237/XIX-72.

²⁵ Stefan Pastuszewski, *Bydgoski listopad 1956* (Bydgoszcz: 1996).

²⁶ Dudek et al., op.cit., 224. See also Kochański, op.cit., 639.

²⁷ Henryk Dominiczak, *Organy bezpieczeństwa PRL 1944–1990* (Warsaw: 1997), 128, 139.

The reduction of political and propaganda attacks on RFE was partly the result of a very careful policy observed by the Polish section of RFE in autumn 1956, which contributed to stabilizing the situation in Poland, consolidating the power of Gomułka, and avoiding Soviet intervention.²⁸ The MSW itself considered the line followed by the Polish section of RFE to be moderate and not targeted at inflaming the situation in Poland and weakening Gomułka's position. According to a study of Department I (Foreign Intelligence) of the MSW from February 1958, there was a new element in RFE broadcasts, i.e. "claiming that the PUWP and its predecessors PPR [Polish Workers' Party] and KPP [Communist Party of Poland] are not 'alien' agents, but a Polish national revolutionary stream, which must be supported for it to get rid of 'alien' traces and influences because the Communists' being in power is unavoidable for the time being."²⁹

RFE's mission, according to the goals formulated by the State Department at that time, was to make Poland gradually independent of the USSR, increase the autonomy of the Polish system model from the Soviet pattern, and broaden the range of internal civil liberties. All of this, at least in the short run, was to be done without removing Gomułka or the PUWP from power, and without any open break with the Soviet bloc. MSW aptly interpreted the intentions of American politics in its main points.³⁰

End of the thaw. In the early 1960s, the fight against Radio Free Europe was intensified, marking the end of several years of truce. PUWP policy as a whole was evolving towards eliminating or restricting the areas of autonomy that had been hard-won by society during the crisis of 1956. After the reintroduction of full censorship of publications and cultural performances, large-scale purges in editorial offices, and clos-

²⁸ Nowak-Jeziorański, *Wojna w eterze*, op.cit., 244–262; Idem, *Polska z oddali. Wspomnienia, Tom 2 1956–1976* (Kraków, 1992), 10–21; Machciewicz, *Emigracja...*, op.cit., 147–148.

²⁹ "Political line of the broadcasting station 'Free Europe' in Munich in the period from October 1956 to January 1958," AIPN, IPN BU 01299/777, information of February 14, 1958.

³⁰ See Jakub Tyszkiewicz, *Otwarte okno w "żelaznej kurtynie": Polityka administracji prezydenta Eisenhowera wobec Polski (październik 1956-styczeń 1961)* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2003); Bennett Kovrig, *Of Walls and Bridges: The United States and Eastern Europe*, (New York: New York University Press, 1991).

ing down the most independent publications, restrictions and repressive measures were aimed at people and circles who maintained contacts with “hostile centers” in the West, especially those who, in the opinion of the Security Service and the Party leadership, were sending abroad information about the situation in the country.³¹

In such an atmosphere, Radio Free Europe, carefully commenting on all the events in the country, trying to gain as much information as possible about the authorities’ policies and about the mood among the Party elite and in intellectual circles, once again became a leading enemy. During the so called “Ideological” Plenary Assembly of the PUWP Central Committee in July 1963, Gomułka delivered a major attack on circles maintaining contacts with “hostile centers” in the West. The starting point for this was the opinion that the focus of the struggle between the capitalist world and the socialist camp had shifted towards ideological confrontation. Gomułka explained to the participants of the plenary assembly that the intention of the West was gradually to weaken the socialist system through propaganda conducted by the “subversion centers” which made extensive use of the services of “reactionary émigrés.”³² He condemned the practice of providing the West with information about the situation in Poland. Referring mainly to the Holland case (a Party journalist who in 1961 died during interrogation by the Security Service in what was widely believed at the time to be a political murder), the First Secretary declared: “Information and political gossip obtained by the hostile foreign centers were diligently used first of all for the purposes of conducting subversive propaganda against our Party and against Poland. On the basis of these materials, articles and broadcasts were prepared about divisions and struggle in the bosom of the Party, aimed at causing confusion and distrust among our members.”³³

³¹ See Andrzej Friszke, “Kultura czy ideologia? Polityka kulturalna kierownictwa PUWP w latach 1957–1963,” in *Władza a społeczeństwo w PRL: Studia historyczne*, ed. A. Friszke (Warsaw: Instytut Studiów Politycznych, 2003), 115–146.

³² Władysław Gomułka, *Przemówienia, styczeń 1963-lipiec 1964*, (Warsaw, 1964) 89.

³³ This remark appears in AAN, PZPR, 1255, 83, but it was not included in the published version mentioned in the previous footnote. In a recent book, Krzysztof Persak has shown that Holland’s death was suicide—contrary to prevailing interpretations at the time. He jumped out of the window. See Krzysztof Persak, *Sprawa Henryka Hollanda* (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2006).

Another barrage of attacks on RFE took place in connection with the *Letter of the 34* (a protest against tightening censorship and publishing restrictions lodged by intellectuals in March 1964 and addressed to Prime Minister Cyrankiewicz). The authorities' response probably would have been weaker if RFE had not broadcast the contents of the letter repeatedly. Gomulka reproached the signatories of the letter not so much with having written it as with having informed the "subversive broadcasting station" about their protest before the authorities had had a chance to take a position on the demands.³⁴ The protest against the use of the Letter by RFE and other foreign centers formed the main thread of the propaganda campaign launched by the authorities, including the so-called Counter-Letters: one signed by some of the signatories of the *Letter of the 34* and published in *The Times* of London, and another with a much more aggressive tone signed by about 600 writers whom the authorities had persuaded to do so. (In view of the fact that Polish Writers' Association had less than 1,000 members, this was a considerable number.)

One direct consequence of *Letter of the 34* was the arrest on October 5, 1964, of Melchior Wańkowicz, one of the most famous Polish writers, who was accused of handing over to RFE the text of a non-delivered speech which had been prepared for the June meeting of Warsaw writers. This material, discussing the harassment of the letter's signatories, had been sent by Wańkowicz through the US Embassy to his daughter living in Washington, and excerpts from it had been broadcast by RFE in July, without revealing the identity of the author. The decision to arrest Wańkowicz was made by the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the PZPR and was probably meant as the next step towards disciplining insubordinate authors, on the one hand, and towards intimidating all those who imparted information to "hostile centers" abroad, on the other.³⁵ The writer was sentenced to three years imprisonment, even though his intention to hand over the speech to RFE was not proven. Once the sentence was announced, in November 1964, he was released due to bad health.³⁶

The authorities do not seem to have accomplished the goals they had sought with Wańkowicz's trial, which undoubtedly had a "show" character. Security Service agents reported that "after the trial, a very specific

³⁴ Jerzy Eisler, "Powodowani troską obywatelską," *Tygodnik Powszechny*, March 14, 2004.

³⁵ Minute no. 2 of September 29, 1964, AAN, 237/VII-21, 506.

³⁶ J. Eisler, *List 34* (Warsaw, 1993) 112–117.

reaction is increased listening to Free Europe by all circles, especially intellectual ones.”³⁷ According to Jan Nowak-Jeziorański, one of the consequences of the attacks on RFE in connection with the *Letter of the 34* was the intensification of contacts with Poland, and a more extensive information supply than before.³⁸ This was confirmed later by Minister of the Interior Franciszek Szlachcic, who, during a meeting of propaganda secretaries of Voivodship Committees of the PUWP in 1971, said that “most information and correspondence directed to subversion centers was sent in 1965, when several thousand pieces of information were sent from the country to these centers.”³⁹

Concept of the enemy. The opinions of Gomułka and of other leadership members were shaped by the MSW, which passed on to the top Party circles information that was based on the concept of certain threats to the socialist system. From the early 1960s onward, Radio Free Europe, *Kultura* (Paris) and other “imperialist” centers played an increasingly important role in this concept. The linkage between Party and security services was, of course, mutual. Influenced by the impulses coming from the center of the Party leadership, the security apparatus intensified the fight against foreign “ideological and political subversion” (in the years 1962–1963 this term became commonly used in the language of both the Party and the Security Service), paid increased attention to “hostile centers,” and tried to uncover and cut off channels through which information was imparted to the West.

In the opinion of the MSW, the external centers were inspiring protests among Polish intellectuals. In the mid-1960s, the Security Service’s perception of the threats to the system was characterized by the idea that stabilization of the situation in the country was accompanied by external “subversion centers” becoming the main enemy. The report of the Department III of the Interior Ministry for 1965 ascertained “a reduction in the signs of hostile activity inside the country,” but noted attempts to disturb political peace by “anti-Communist centers” exhorting the boycott of elections in order to “trigger off tension and turmoil in the country.”⁴⁰

³⁷ Report of a secret collaborator with codename “Ewa,” December 3, 1964, AIPN, IPN 0192/72, vol. 3, 187.

³⁸ Nowak, *Polska z oddali*, op.cit., 148.

³⁹ Information of the Minister of the Interior presented in a meeting of propaganda secretaries of PUWP Voivodship Committees, AIPN, IPN 0665/176.

⁴⁰ Report on the results of work for the year 1965, AIPN, IPN 01256/522 (January 1966) 56.

This thesis was even more clearly formulated in a document from May 1966: "In the area of class struggle, a clear shift of the front to the level of foreign countries Poland has taken place."⁴¹

In this view, "subversion" was an attempt not only to inspire declared opponents of socialism, but also to influence the situation in the Party, trigger conflicts, and cause divisions. It was allegedly done in two ways. First, by supporting "revisionists" (primarily intellectuals calling themselves Marxists, former or present PUWP members, who were demanding further liberalization and reforms). To further their ends, the external centers had given up their openly anti-Communist Cold War rhetoric: "This is a sign of the hostile centers' *adaptation* to the changed situation in Poland, where those showing hostility do not nowadays use slogans directly attacking the socialist system, but act in the capacity of *socialism repairers*."⁴²

Another method used by RFE was attacking the so called "partisan group" around the Vice-Minister (after 1964, Minister) of the Interior, Mieczysław Moczar, who was claimed to be striving for power in the Party and in the state. The Security Service assessed the anti-Moczar campaign conducted by the Polish section of RFE as slanderous, but presented it in internal documents, the first of which appeared in 1963, as a serious threat to the Party's cohesion.⁴³ The systematic unmasking of 'partisans' initiated by RFE in 1962 (after a decision by RFE Polish Service Director Jan Nowak-Jeziorański, relying on information from members of the Party leadership, such as Adam Rapacki and Oskar Lange), was probably one of the reasons the MSW fought RFE with so much ardour in the 1960s.⁴⁴ The Security Service quickly realized that the leaks to Munich came from the top level of the regime. MSW obtained information that the first broadcast about the "partisans" had been prepared by the Polish section of RFE using materials "provided by a person holding

⁴¹ "Ideological-political subversion (theses)," AIPN, IPN 0296/150, t. 1 (May 1966), 239.

⁴² "Fighting against the signs of ideological-political subversion," AIPN, IPN 0296/150, vol. 1, undated, 208. Emphasis in the original text.

⁴³ "Signs of ideological-political subversion from abroad on the country," AIPN, IPN 0296/150, vol. 1 (1963), 109.

⁴⁴ Nowak, *Polska z oddali*, op.cit., 261-265. The author did not cite the names of his informants, but disclosed them later in a program recorded for the series "Rzeczpospolita Dwa i pół" by Jerzy Diatłowski, broadcast by Polish TV in 1993.

a high Party position in Poland. Texts or reports from the sessions of the Politburo are also delivered in the same way via London or New York to Munich.”⁴⁵

The main center dealing with Western “subversion”—both the analytical aspect and in terms of operational countermeasures—was the MSW, but, from the mid-1960s onwards, other institutions became increasingly involved in the issue, and they adopted the point of view of the security apparatus. The degree of importance attached at top Party levels to the threat of “subversion” is indicated by a comprehensive paper prepared by an interdepartmental team (made up of representatives of Central Committee PUWP, MSW, Ministry of National Defense, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and entitled: “Activity with regard to foreign propaganda, psychological war and ideological subversion of imperialism and our countermeasures.” This report, prepared over several months at the request of the Committee of National Defense in January 1966, elaborated on the functioning of the most important Western informational and propaganda institutions, including RFE and other broadcasting stations. The starting point was the assumption that, from the beginning of the 1960s, “psychological war,” “ideological and political subversion” and “propaganda” (terms used synonymously) had become an increasingly important tool in the struggle waged against the Soviet bloc by the United States and other Western countries.⁴⁶

The main target of the Western “subversive-ideological” attack was claimed to be Poland, “due to its key strategic and political location, and its political role in the socialist system.” The most important “channel of activity” was radio propaganda. It was emphasized that the “subversive broadcasting stations” broadcast more programs in Polish than in any other language (38 broadcasting hours per day against only 27 for Czechoslovakia, for instance). Radio Free Europe was the most important station because it had “the most offensive type of activity” and the largest broadcasting scale. It was estimated that RFE’s “broadcasts in the Polish language make up 85% of the total broadcasting time of all Western radios devoted to subversion and propaganda directed against Poland.”⁴⁷

⁴⁵ “Information concerning the contacts disclosed with the broadcasting station Radio Free Europe (RFE),” AIPN, IPN 01299/358 (July 21, 1962), 9–10.

⁴⁶ “Activity with regard to foreign propaganda, psychological war and ideological subversion of the imperialism and our countermeasures,” AAN, PZPRP-ZPR, 237/V-707 (June 1966), 5.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 28–30, 73.

The data quoted may be regarded as dubious in terms of accuracy, but it should be mentioned that the Security Service probably carried out the first quasi-scientific opinion poll with regard to audience rating of the Western broadcasting stations. In 1965, “information from people representing various social circles was collected in a confidential way [further information on the methodology is not available] from the Wrocław, Poznań, Kraków, and Warszawa voivodships, and from Łódź. According to this information, about one-third of Poles were listening to Western broadcasting stations, “primarily RFE” (7,738 people out of about 23,000 respondents).⁴⁸ At the same time, the Security Service was warning the Party leadership that “in many regions of Poland, the audibility of the Polish Radio Broadcasting Station is very poor, while the audibility of RFE is good.”⁴⁹

Data collected by the Security Service can probably be regarded as relatively credible. The results of the first survey run by the Center for Public Opinion Research (OBOP) on the subject of radio listening—carried out by more scientific methods—did not differ strikingly from those of the Security Service, even though they showed higher audience ratings. (This survey and subsequent ones, conducted on an irregular basis up until the end of Communist rule, were confidential in character, and intended for Party and state leadership.) According to OBOP, in February 1969 about 48% of adult Poles were listening to Western broadcasting stations.⁵⁰ According to OBOP data, in the first half of the 1970s, listening to foreign broadcasting stations (mainly RFE) declined significantly. This could be explained as resulting from the calmer atmosphere and declining public interest in politics in the first years under Gierek. Starting in 1977, audience rates started rising once more (again this refers mainly to RFE). At that time, the economic crisis was already clearly felt, the pe-

⁴⁸ “Report on the results of work for year 1965,” AIPN, IPN 01256/522, Department III, (January 1966), 58–59.

⁴⁹ “Information concerning contacts of Polish citizens with hostile centers; signs of hostile propaganda; disclosure of the fact of stealing and attempting to smuggle valuable museum collections to Italy,” AIPN, IPN, 01265/1504, Information of Department III of the MSW for CC PUWP, (November 10, 1966).

⁵⁰ For the results of the OBOP polls compiled by Jolanta Hajdasz, see “Odbiór audycji Rozgłośni Polskiej RWE w Polsce” in *Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość*, 2 (6) (2004) 309–328. See Chapter Seven for a comparison of the results of opinion polls by OBOP and Radio Free Europe Audience and Public Opinion Research.

riod of stabilization and hopes for the socialist “economic miracle” were ending, and organized opposition had arisen. This shows that listening to Western broadcasting stations was more intensive in times of political tension, and that Radio Free Europe was a broadcasting station mostly sought out for information, especially about politics.

MSW Offensive. Fighting against “ideological and political subversion” was considered to be one of the key tasks of the MSW. Actions on a wide scale began in 1962. According to a 1963 MSW document, “For about one year, the activity of Western and Exile propaganda and subversion centers has been a matter of active interest to Department I [foreign intelligence] of the MSW. Pursuant to the guidelines of the MSW leadership, in Division VIII of Department I a special group was established, which started working out these issues. As a result of work of our unit, it became possible to recognize the issues, mechanism of work, organizational structure, personnel makeup, etc. of the most important Western and Exile centers, organs and institutions of psychological war.”⁵¹

So far, these were only “advanced preparations for a more thorough and comprehensive investigation” of the opponent, and for “taking appropriate countermeasures.” The countermeasures were to include “quickly identifying information leaks from the country,” as well as detecting the attempts of “subversion centers” to contact Poles traveling abroad. Disinformation and propaganda actions aimed at “discrediting” hostile institutions and individuals both at home and in the emigration were planned, as well as more offensive actions, including sabotage and violence: “Further progress in the penetration of the above-mentioned objects makes it possible to undertake operational measures in order to hamper the activity of the psychological war centers through e.g. destroying files and archives, destroying or intercepting anti-Communist literature, disorganizing of radio propaganda, sabotage of technical devices, physical sanctions against émigrés who pursue a particularly hostile activity, intrigues and inspiring conflicts amongst workers, etc.”⁵²

This plan to fight “subversion” was gradually implemented. The main burden rested on two MSW departments. The responsibility of Department I (foreign intelligence) was operational reconnaissance of the “centers of subversion and propaganda conducting activity directed against

⁵¹ “Signs of ideological-political subversion from abroad on the country,” AIPN, IPN 0296/150 vol. 1, 107.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 115–117.

the PRL.” It is highly significant that this should have been put on a par with “identifying intelligence headquarters and cells of the main capitalist countries.”⁵³ Department III (internal security) was responsible for identifying people cooperating with “subversion centers” inside Poland, or with channels used to pass information abroad. The latter task was often mentioned as an essential one. In MSW documents it was emphasized that, without the supply of credible and detailed information from inside the country, both Radio Free Europe and the Paris *Kultura* would lose a crucial part of their importance and their capability to exert influence.

In their fight against “subversion,” Departments I and III were supported by Department II (foreign counterintelligence), which monitored the contacts of Polish citizens with foreigners and the personnel of embassies and consulates, since this was one of the possible ways of passing on information to the “subversion centers.” On the other hand, the “W” office and its field outlets dealing with correspondence control (i.e. “W” sections in Voivodship Civic Militia headquarters) confiscated letters addressed to RFE and handed them over to Department III, which subjected their authors to operational controls that sometimes led to arrests and trials (usually on charges of “spreading false news”).⁵⁴

In the 1960s, the struggle against “foreign subversion” became one of the most important tasks not only of the security apparatus but also of other official institutions with a special focus on the “ideological front.” In 1963, “a new subject—ideological and political subversion issues” was added to Security Service operational training.⁵⁵ A highly active program of creating and placing in domestic media “materials about the hostile activity of psychological war centers” had begun.⁵⁶

⁵³ “Directions of work and tasks of the Security Service for year 1964,” AIPN, MSW II 589, December 23, 1963, 84.

⁵⁴ In a file with the codename *Pomocnicy* (Helpers) found in the IPN archive, a few dozen such cases from the years 1970-1972 are described. See “Materials concerning authors of letters sent to the radio ‘Free Europe,’” AIPN, IPN 0140/4. An example of a case from the earlier period is the arrest of Kazimierz Chałupnik in Kraków, “suspected of having sent letters slandering Central Committee members to the broadcasting station ‘Free Europe.’” See “Information on the basis of quarterly reports of Department III of Security Service at the MO Provincial Headquarters in Kraków,” AIPN, IPN 01265/1549 (February 10, 1959).

⁵⁵ “Ideological-political subversion against socialist camp countries,” AIPN, IPN 0397/330 (November 30, 1963), 37.

⁵⁶ “Signs of ideological-political subversion from abroad towards the country,” AIPN, IPN, 0296/150, vol. 1, 107.

A prominent figure in this propaganda campaign was Dr. Janusz Kolczyński, closely co-operating with the MSW and using information received through operational channels. In 1963, he published in the columns of the Warsaw *Kultura* a series of articles directed against RFE. In 1964 he published a book entitled *Dywerysja* (*Subversion*) dealing with RFE and the Paris *Kultura*, and in 1969 a book entirely devoted to the Free Europe Committee and Radio Free Europe.⁵⁷ The same Kolczyński became the head of the East-West Center that was founded in 1965, initially functioning within the Polish Institute of International Affairs, then independently, and in 1975 extended and renamed the Institute for Contemporary Problems of Capitalism.⁵⁸ Closely co-operating with MSW Department I, it played the role of the main specialist and analytical center for both the MSW and the Central Committee of the PUWP in the fight against “political and ideological subversion.”

Less is known about the activity of units conducting disinformation aimed at discrediting opponents, spreading false information abroad, and inflaming conflicts. Undoubtedly, such activities were conducted with different intensity in different periods, with probably the greatest intensity in the first half of the 1970s. Jan Nowak-Jeziorański described extensively how these activities affected him.⁵⁹ It can be assumed that such activities were conducted by at least two MSW units. One of them was Inspectorate “I,” operating within the structures of Department I, (also referred to as Independent Section “I” and, after 1978, Section XII).⁶⁰ At the beginning of the 1970s, the group “D” was established within Department III, for the purpose of “programming of influence and disinformation activities towards anti-Communist centers.”⁶¹ No documents produced by either of the aforementioned units have been found. In the event of such obviously illegal activities the common practice was to leave as

⁵⁷ “Mechanizm ideologicznej dywersji,” *Kultura*, November 24, 1963; “Wolna Europa” (1 and 2), *Kultura* (December 1 and 8, 1963); *Dywerysja* (Warsaw, 1964); *Wolna Europa* (Warsaw, 1969).

⁵⁸ “Memorandum about establishing the East-West Center,” AIPN, MSW II 31148 (November 10, 1965), 1.

⁵⁹ Nowak, *Polska z oddali*, op. cit., 383–413.

⁶⁰ Paweł Piotrowski, “Struktury Służby Bezpieczeństwa MSW” in *Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość*, 1 (3)/2003, 59–60.

⁶¹ “Tasks of Department III resulting from the resolutions of the VIth Congress of PUWP and the national conference of the Ministry of the Interior,” AIPN, IPN 0365/104, vol. 1 (February 1972) 718.

little trace in writing as possible, and to destroy meticulously (on a regular basis and more particularly in the years 1989–1990) what was recorded in documents.

Operational activities abroad. One of the main objectives of the Security Service was operational reconnaissance of the RFE team in Munich, aimed at acquiring as much information as possible, in order to recruit secret collaborators within the Polish section, and take various actions targeted against the Radio. A permanent method was using the acquaintances and family members of people employed in the Radio team to investigate staff-members' opinions and find out if they would be willing to cooperate, and also to collect information about the situation within the Polish section, about possible conflicts and individual weaknesses, which would be useful when undertaking recruitment attempts. In many cases, the method of blackmail was used: passports were delivered on condition that the recipient agree to report to a MSW officer after returning to Poland. In other cases, family emotions were appealed to: people traveling abroad were assured that cooperating with the authorities was in the best interest of the relative working for RFE; it would pave the way for them to return to Poland, where they could improve their financial situation, enjoy better professional opportunities, etc.

Agent "Fonda." The first measurable operational success was the result of the work of Department I, which in November 1963 recruited for cooperation one of the RFE announcers.⁶² The motivation for cooperating was money, paid by intelligence officers during each of the meetings, which always took place outside Munich (in Vienna, Geneva, The Hague). "Fonda" (that was his code-name) was not an important figure, he had limited information, and little contact with the directors of the Polish section. Nevertheless, the MSW assessed the information received from him as operationally valuable. The operation with "Fonda" demonstrates clearly the MSW's interests, plans, and intentions towards the Radio. In the first meeting, the agent committed himself to handing over original documents from RFE, as well as information on contacts between the Radio and the Paris *Kultura*. From the beginning, Department I was mostly interested in RFE's contacts in Poland. Among other

⁶² I described the circumstances of recruitment and the detailed course of cooperation in the article "Teczka 'Fondy', czyli o początkach penetracji agenturalnej Radia Wolna Europa," in *Władza a społeczeństwo w PRL. Studia historyczne*, ed. A. Friszke (Warsaw: 2003), 175–196.

things, “Fonda” was to acquire original letters from listeners in Poland, as well as the names of RFE collaborators charged with collecting information from Poles who were abroad either temporarily (as tourists or on business) or permanently (as refugees or asylum-seekers). This theme foreshadowed one of the main directions of MSW activity in subsequent years, which was to penetrate the network of RFE correspondents who interviewed travelers from Poland.

One of the themes of the report of the officer who recruited “Fonda” is of special interest. “In the course of the talks I probingly asked Fonda about the possibility of perpetrating a sabotage act on the broadcasting station, i.e. specifically blowing it up, immobilizing it for a longer time, or total destruction,” the officer of the First Department wrote. Sabotage on a smaller scale was also considered: exchanging tapes and airing a broadcast prepared by the MSW. In the opinion of “Fonda,” it was possible, but he pointed out that after “a few minutes the control will recognize this moment and the broadcast will be interrupted.” He also suggested destroying the control room, “which is the heart of the broadcasting station [...] In return for an adequate, agreed-upon remuneration, Fonda is willing to be the organizer of this action based on a small-sized explosive material we would provide him with. By the next meeting, Fonda will look around the building taking into consideration the technical aspect of this matter, the possible material location.”⁶³

In the margin of this passage there is a hand-written question mark, made by a superior. Maybe the officer recruiting “Fonda” was exercising his own initiative, but it should also be kept in mind that sabotage was one of the methods of combating RFE mentioned in the documents quoted above, and that a sabotage act really took place in Munich in 1981, when a bomb planted near the wall of the building of the Czechoslovak section exploded and seriously injured several employees.⁶⁴

A hand-written paper prepared by “Fonda” contains basic information on RFE, including information on the tasks of individual departments, methods of editorial work, American management, security, etc.

⁶³ “Report on the recruitment conversation,” AIPN, IPN 00221/1 (November 21, 1963), 7.

⁶⁴ Sig Mickelson, *America's Other Voice; The Story of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty* (New York: Praeger, 1983), 5–9. See Chapter Ten for an account of Romanian leader Ceaușescu's instigation of the 1981 bombing.

From the MSW's point of view, the profiles of the Polish team members must have been of great importance. The newly recruited agent provided the Interior Ministry with brief, but at least partly new information on the employees of the Polish section: their real names (newscasters often used pseudonyms on the air), opinions, private lives, legal status (type of passport or temporary document), families in Poland, relationship with director Jan Nowak-Jeziorański. This information was then used both in propaganda attacks (specifically distorted) and in operations, such as attempts to reach family members in Poland. For the Interior Ministry, it was also important to find out who was in conflict with the director of the Polish service, information which could be used for purposes of recruitment, or at least fuelling internal disputes and antagonisms. In some cases, "Fonda" openly suggested "using" certain people.

The most important lead from "Fonda" was connected with Kazimierz Zamorski, who directed the Polish Section of the Research and Analysis Department, a unit independent of Nowak, reporting directly to the American management of the Radio. According to Polish government propaganda, it was the "central cell of spy work."⁶⁵ Zamorski was responsible for evaluating the reports of travelers from Poland who, during their trips to the West, agreed to answer questions from RFE field representatives at offices around Europe.

In the following years, attempts were made to take advantage of the antagonism between Zamorski and Nowak. "These feelings were aggravated as a result of our influence and operational activities," said a report for the director of Department I.⁶⁶ Ultimately neither the efforts to recruit Zamorski nor the attempts to induce him to return to Poland and use this for propaganda purposes proved successful. But the very fact of establishing direct contact with a person holding such a high position in RFE, first through a letter with the offer of cooperation, and then in the form of direct meetings with an intelligence agent code-named "Lucis," was an unquestionable success.⁶⁷

Cooperation with "Fonda" turned out to be futile in the long run. The agent did not deliver the information required, such as handing over an

⁶⁵ Koleczyński, *Wolna Europa*, op.cit., 183.

⁶⁶ "Report on operational measures in the case with the codename 'Morski,'" AIPN, IPN 0221/5, July 29, 1975.

⁶⁷ Konrad Rokicki and Robert Spatek described the efforts to make Zamorski cooperate with the MSW in "Donos z Monachium," in *Wprost*, May 12, 2002.

impression of the key to rooms in the Polish section of the Research and Analysis Department. The sketch he prepared of these rooms was considered insufficiently detailed and of little use—but it clearly shows what the MSW was most interested in. “Fonda” continuously needed money and so he sold the miniature camera he got from the intelligence service to take photographs of documents. His cooperation broke off in December 1964 and the efforts made to pick it up again in 1967 were not successful.⁶⁸

Agents Czechowicz, Lach. By the second half of the 1960s, the MSW had new agents in RFE who were more disciplined than “Fonda.” Andrzej Czechowicz, a young émigré from Poland, was induced to cooperate. After a stay in a refugee camp and a short stint in guard companies in West Germany, he began work in the Research and Analysis Department in April 1965. Materials in the MSW files concerning Czechowicz’s activity as an agent were either destroyed, or could not be found. However, in the personal file that was established after he was brought back to Poland in 1971, there is a hand-written letter of September 8, 1964, which he addressed to the Polish Military Mission in Berlin. At that time, he was working in a guard unit for British forces in Germany. He asked for permission to come back to Poland, declaring that he was “ready to suffer any punishment” for his illegal stay abroad, that he could “still do a lot for Poland” in order to “make up for the evil I’ve done to our homeland.”⁶⁹ In the letter, nothing is mentioned about his readiness for intelligence activity, nor about applying for a job with RFE. Czechowicz only wanted to get the right to return to Poland without incurring any consequences. According to other documents, the process of granting permission to issue a new passport for Czechowicz and authorizing his return to Poland took several months, and in the meantime the young fugitive started work with RFE, which the Security Service evidently decided to make use of. Czechowicz himself admitted after 1989 that he was forced into cooperation shortly after starting work with RFE. He said that the Communist intelligence service used the letter sent to the Polish Military Mission, the disclosure of which might have discredited the author in the eyes of his RFE superiors.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Machcewicz, *Teczka Fondy*, op.cit., 191–195.

⁶⁹ “Personal files of Andrzej Czechowicz,” AIPN, 01703/100, 39–40.

⁷⁰ Czechowicz made this claim in conversations with Ewa Berberyusz (“Jednorazowo zużyty,” *Tygodnik Powszechny*, August 12, 1990), and during a meeting

Like “Fonda,” Czechowicz had a subordinate position in RFE. But he had access to reports prepared on the basis of talks with visitors from Poland. Copies of these materials were the main part of what Czechowicz was handing over to Warsaw. According to Interior Minister Franciszek Szlachcic, about five thousand reports reached the MSW in this way.⁷¹ In the archive of the Institute of National Remembrance, a file with reports provided by him about the relationship between state and church in Poland was found.⁷² These reports did not contain the names of informers. It can be assumed that the operational value of information delivered by Czechowicz was limited. Probably more important was his knowledge of people and internal relationships in the Polish section of RFE that could be used in propaganda attacks and other operational activities in the 1970s. Withdrawing and “burning” a valuable agent by disclosure would be a measure contrary to the basic operating principles of every intelligence service.

In August 1968, MSW Department I managed to plant within Radio Free Europe an agent recruited a few months earlier in Vienna. Mieczysław Lach had illegally stayed abroad in 1965. He was recruited through a friend, apparently an RFE freelancer in Vienna, who was a MSW agent with the code-name “Freda.” In both cases, the motivation was financial, but in Lach’s case an additional argument was that cooperation with the intelligence services would open up the possibility to return to Poland at some future date. “Kumor” (Lach’s code-name) started work in the Audience and Opinion Research Department. It was the first and the only known case of recruiting an agent before that person joined RFE. Lach’s main task was “identification of the RFE information sources in the country.”⁷³

with Kazimierz Zamorski in 1992 (K. Zamorski, *Pod anteną Radia Wolna Europa* (Poznań: 1995), 183.) In the program “Rzeczpospolita Dwa i Pół” by Jerzy Diatłowski, broadcast by Polish TV in 1995, he confirmed the circumstances of recruitment previously described to Berberyusz and Zamorski. In 2004 and 2005 he repeated basically the same story in interviews: with Jane L. Curry (oral history interview deposited in the Hoover Institution Archives), and with Paweł Machcewicz (tape in the possession of the author).

⁷¹ “Information of the MSW presented in a conference of propaganda secretaries of the PUWP Voivodship Committees,” AIPN, IPN 0665/176 (1971), 6.

⁷² Photocopies of RFE reports obtained by Captain A. Czechowicz concerning Roman Catholic Church in Poland, AIPN, IPN 0639/56.

⁷³ Report on the recruitment of ‘Kumor’ of May 11, 1968, AIPN 02221/7, 8.

Far less documentation concerning cooperation with Lach has been preserved than concerning “Fonda.” There is no detailed description of the information delivered by “Kumor.” It can be assumed that it consisted mainly of reports on listenership to RFE in Poland, prepared by the department in which he was employed. “In December 1969, agent started handing over original documents from the object and in March 1970 secret and confidential documents. [...] Information from the agent was very useful for operational reconnaissance of the object,” read the final assessment of Lach’s work as an agent.⁷⁴ In another document it was admitted that, after Czechowicz’s return, Lach “remained the only source working in the object” and it was emphasized that he was very active: “When collecting documents on the object: obtaining descriptions, reports, recording conversations with employees, taking photographs of them, in part operating an 8 mm camera, the agent has shown a lot of initiative, ingenuity and commitment.”⁷⁵ In his cooperation with MSW, the agent made use of his two personal passions: photography and skiing. “Kumor” and “Freda” took part in “excursions organized by the trade unions.”⁷⁶ Presumably, the photographs of RFE employees run in propaganda publications in the 1970s and 1980s (and in Czechowicz’s “memoirs”) were at least partly taken by Lach. He was co-author of one such publication, the fictionalized story “Ufam ci Kilroy” [“I Trust You, Kilroy”], noteworthy for the intensity of its slanders and calumnies on the employees of RFE.⁷⁷

The Gierek Era: 1971-1975

“Return” of Czechowicz. The greatest propaganda campaign ever organized against Radio Free Europe was connected with Andrzej Czechowicz’s return to Poland in March 1971. It was jointly prepared by the MSW, the Press Office and Propaganda Department of CC PUWP, and

⁷⁴ “Final note to volume no. 1560 of the file of work of agent ‘Kumor’,” *ibid*, August 15, 1974, 14–15.

⁷⁵ “Note about agent ‘Kumor’ for the period May 11, 1968–August 31, 1974,” *ibid*, August 26, 1974, 21–22.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁷⁷ Mieczysław Lach, Zdzisław Uberman, *Ufam Ci Kilroy* (Warsaw: 1983).

the Main Political Administration of the Polish Army.⁷⁸ Czechowicz was presented as an officer of the intelligence service with the rank of captain who had been infiltrated into the Munich center by the MSW. In the propaganda campaign, documents and reports from other sources, such as Mieczysław Lach, were also used.⁷⁹

Czechowicz's statements, carefully prepared by the Security Service, were focused on several themes.⁸⁰ The dominant theme, present in almost all statements and publications, was an attack on RFE informants in Poland. Czechowicz claimed to have ascertained the names of people who either passed on information from inside Poland to RFE, or, while staying abroad, agreed to be interviewed by RFE field reporters. The importance of cutting off sources of information inside the country was singled out by Interior Minister Szlachcic, in a meeting with propaganda secretaries of the PUWP voivodship committees, as the main purpose of the campaign around Czechowicz's return to Poland. He spoke of 300 Polish citizens, "who intentionally or recklessly, but systematically, were informing 'Free Europe.' In some cases, it may be necessary to institute legal proceedings, but it has been generally decided for the management of institutions and places of work and the secretaries of Party organizations to carry out talks with all the people concerned. Among informers, there are also well known names..." Szlachcic considered the whole campaign a great success, which would hamper the activity of RFE. "Its old, longstanding, domestic sources of information have been cut off, some foreign newspapers are withdrawing from cooperation with 'Free Europe' as a discredited institution [...] I think this is not the last blow, although a very well-aimed one," the minister declared.⁸¹

It is remarkable that nothing is known about this barrage of warning talks, nor about the people whose names Czechowicz allegedly re-

⁷⁸ "Information of the Minister of the Interior presented in a conference of propaganda secretaries of the PUWP Voivodship Committees," AIPN, IPN 0665/176 (1971), 5–6.

⁷⁹ "Final note to volume no. 1560 of the file of work of agent 'Kumor,'" AIPN, IPN, 00221/7, August 15, 1974, 15.

⁸⁰ In a TV program by Jerzy Diatłowski with the participation of Czechowicz and Jerzy Kudaś-Bronisławski, a former MSW functionary, it was admitted that the campaign was organized and all the revelations were carefully edited by the MSW.

⁸¹ "Information of the Minister of the Interior presented in the conference of propaganda secretaries of the PUWP Voivodship Committees," AIPN, IPN 0665/176 (1971), 6–7.

vealed being called to account. Maybe he failed in reality to get hold of the names of domestic informants, which were one of RFE's best guarded secrets and were subject to special security procedures. His claim that by "using a special technique to open envelopes" he was able to "look into secret materials without it being noticed" could have been a propaganda ploy to emphasize the efficiency and omniscience of the Polish intelligence service, and discourage anyone tempted to pass on information to the West.⁸² In the MSW documents no traces were found indicating that Czechowicz had enabled the security apparatus to gain access to the list of domestic RFE informants.

Ostpolitik and Senator Fulbright. The attempt to cut off Radio Free Europe from domestic sources of information was the main purpose of the propaganda campaign around Czechowicz, but it was not the only one. Another aim was to exacerbate the Radio's problems both in Germany and in the United States. Following the SPD's election victory in West Germany in 1969, and the launching of *Ostpolitik*, a new policy aimed at normalizing relationships and reducing tensions in relationships with Poland and other East European countries, the further functioning of RFE on German soil became an issue. The Polish authorities demanded the removal of RFE from Germany during negotiations before signing the border agreement between Poland and West Germany in December 1970, and again during talks aimed at reviving political and economic contacts and—especially important for the German side—determining conditions under which Germans living in Poland could emigrate to West Germany.⁸³

At the same time, on the other side of the Atlantic, the fate of Radio Free Europe was hanging in the balance. When the Radio's clandestine financing by the CIA was disclosed, it was strongly criticized in the US Congress as an institution not subjected to democratic control, "a relic of the Cold War" hampering international détente, and an obstacle to improved relationships with the Communist bloc. This period of uncertainty ended only in October 1973, when Congress established the Board for

⁸² "Kapitan Andrzej Czechowicz wykonał zadanie: Przywiozłem wiele tomów dokumentów: Relacje oficera polskiego wywiadu," *Trybuna Ludu*, March 13, 1971.

⁸³ A. Puddington, *Broadcasting Freedom: The Cold War Triumph of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2000), 175–186; J. Nowak-Jeziorański, *Polska z oddali*, op.cit., 364–366.

International Broadcasting to oversee open Congressional appropriations ensuring RFE's continued operation.

Offensive against RFE. Lasting almost three years, this period of uncertainty with regard to the future of the Radio was used by the Polish authorities to increase the offensive against RFE in several domains: propaganda, diplomacy, and security-apparatus activity. The domains were synchronized, and the choice of convenient moments for attack was not accidental. Attacks against the Radio related to Czechowicz's return were intended to provide arguments for all those in the USA and West Germany who perceived RFE as an obstacle to international détente. The aim was to present RFE as an institution that not only conducted aggressive propaganda in the "spirit of cold war," but was also concretely engaged in espionage. At the same time, the attacks were supposed to deepen RFE employees' fears for the station's future, and make them more vulnerable to pressure from the Communist Special Services, and more open to suggestions of returning to Poland.

We may hypothesize that part of Czechowicz's allegations "about RFE conducting intelligence operations against countries on whose territories it develops its activity" was to provide German opponents of the Radio with arguments.⁸⁴ The allegations that RFE fabricated data from travelers from Eastern Europe concerning audience size and assessment of radio broadcasts provided Senator Fulbright with arguments for his polemics against RFE. During sessions of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Fulbright referred to Czechowicz's "revelations" and claimed that Czechowicz had unmasked an RFE spy network in Poland.⁸⁵ Czechowicz's broad hints that he was not the only Polish secret agent in the Munich team were aimed to increase shock and mutual distrust in the Polish section, and probably also to convince American public opinion that an institution that absorbed vast amounts of American tax-pay-

⁸⁴ *Kapitan Czechowicz wykonał zadani: Fragmenty relacji Andrzeja Czechowicza dla prasy, radia i telewizji*, (Warszawa: 1971), 107.

⁸⁵ S. Mickelson, *op.cit.*, 130; Cord Meyer, *Facing Reality: From World Federalism to the CIA* (New York: Trident, 1969) 135; J. Nowak-Jeziorański, *Polska z oddali, op.cit.*, 373. MSW documents contain no trace of attempts to inspire directly Fulbright or his circle. However, information was collected from generally available American materials, and from Polish diplomats working in the USA, about the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, using the codename Politykierzy (Politicians). See AIPN, IPN 01591/931.

ers' money, and in defense of which "cold-war circles" were desperately struggling, was thoroughly penetrated by Communist agents.⁸⁶

The atmosphere around RFE, created during the propaganda campaign connected with Czechowicz, provided an appropriate background for diplomatic action. On May 26, 1971, the Polish authorities submitted diplomatic notes to the US and West German governments demanding the liquidation of the broadcasting station. Arguments "borrowed word for word" from Czechowicz (or rather from the Security Service carefully preparing his statements) were used: "According to irrefutable evidence held by the Polish authorities, RFE is not only conducting propaganda activity, but also intelligence, subversion and subversive activity, using to a large extent the network of offices and branches spread in a number of European countries. About 80% of materials obtained via various RFE channels are sent in the form of reports to the headquarters of the American intelligence service."⁸⁷ The "subversion and espionage" character of RFE was emphasized by Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs Józef Winiewicz when handing over the note to the US Ambassador in Warsaw.⁸⁸

The attacks against RFE connected with Czechowicz were continued in the following years. As early as 1971, a collection of the "captain's" most important statements was published, and in 1973 his extensive "memoirs," entitled *Siedem trudnych lat* (*Seven difficult years*) appeared. A new thread was added that had been missing in the first barrage of attacks in 1971: accusations that the head of the Polish section, Jan Nowak-Jeziorański, the legendary courier of the Armia Krajowa (Home Army), had cooperated with the Nazi occupier. In the first edition of *Siedem trudnych lat*, Nowak was presented as a German intelligence agent.⁸⁹ The second edition, published in 1974, contained a facsimile of a statement by a *Volksdeutsch* from Żyrardów, Johann Kassner, who alleged that in the years 1940–1942 Jan Nowak-Jeziorański had been commissioned to administer confiscated Jewish property on behalf of the occupation authorities.

⁸⁶ *Kapitan Czechowicz...*, op.cit., 28.

⁸⁷ "Aide-Memoire to the US Embassy," Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMSZ), 13/78, fascicule 11.

⁸⁸ "Urgent note from the conversation of comrade Winiewicz with the US Ambassador on the 26th of this month," AMSZ, 40/75, fascicule 2, May 27, 1971. Ambassador Stoessel's report on the meeting is published as Document 54 in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976*, XXIX (Washington: Government Printing Office, 2008).

⁸⁹ A. Czechowicz, *Siedem trudnych lat* (Warsaw: 1973), 149–152.

These accusations were part of the disinformation campaign conducted by the Security Service, mainly in Western Europe. Its main element was distribution, to German newspapers, among others, of fabricated documents indicating the alleged cooperation of the director of the Polish section with the Nazi occupier. Another aspect was the publication in the Polish press in February 1972 of a fabricated letter from Jan Nowak-Jeziorański accusing Senator Fulbright of pro-Communist sympathies, and exhorting Polish Americans to oppose his re-election. The letter was read out by Senator Fulbright during a session of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and became the object of fierce discussion. Nowak himself testified on this occasion, as did his American supervisors.⁹⁰

Like the campaign orchestrated around Czechowicz's return, these actions resulted from instructions to increase operational activities and intensify "disinformation" and "disintegration" actions that were formulated in the early 1970s in nearly all statements and documents outlining the directions of work of the Security Service.⁹¹ These instructions were the result of top-level commands. In a joint session of the Political Bureau and government presidium, which took place on November 16, 1972, the MSW received instructions to intensify its activities. "More offensive and efficient measures are to be taken against subversion centers, especially RFE and all opposition," commanded Edward Gierek.⁹²

Intensification of the fight against RFE in the early 1970s was not intended merely to increase the Radio's problems in America and West Germany and use them to maximally weaken the opponent, and perhaps—if conditions were favorable—strike a "fatal blow." At least two other factors influenced the thinking of the Party leadership and the MSW. First, the assumption that, after crushing intellectual opposition (in March 1968) and pacifying workers' circles (in December 1970), the

⁹⁰ The description of 'disinformation activities' comes from Nowak, *Polska z odali*, op.cit., 383–407.

⁹¹ See, for instance, "Activity directions of the department of the interior in the year 1972," materials from the national conference of January 7, 1972, AIPN, IPN 0665/174; "Main tasks of division III in the light of the binding new documents and directives of the Party and government leadership," paper for the national conference (April 17–18, 1972) AIPN, IPN 0365/104, vol. 1, 263–263, 322.

⁹² "Meeting of the leadership on November 17, 1972," AIPN, MSW II 111, 128. See Document 38 in Part Six.

main remaining threat to the system was external “subversion.” In the words of the Director of Department III, Colonel Henryk Piętek, during an MSW board session in September 1971, “increased penetration of the political and ideological area by foreign centers can be observed. The domestic revisionists’ centers have fallen into a state of torpor and they lack a scheme of action...”⁹³

Détente. Another factor was the perception of détente by the Party leadership and the MSW. Détente in relationships between the Western countries and the socialist camp, liberalization of the passport policy leading to a considerable growth in departures, opening to the West in the economic and cultural spheres—all this created new dangers to the political system. “In the current structure of the international situation and increasing stabilization of the economic and social situation in the country, a shift of the confrontation front between the socialist and capitalist camp towards the ideological and political level can be observed. In this situation, these forces are of great importance, which conduct activity aimed at developing the awareness of the socialist countries’ societies,” stated a MSW analysis from October 1972.⁹⁴

Of course, this perception of détente was typical not only of the Polish leadership, but also of the “comrades” responsible for propaganda and ideology in the “fraternal parties.” In May 1974, the fight against ideological penetration on the part of the capitalist countries was discussed in Moscow, during a meeting of the Central Committee secretaries of the Soviet bloc responsible for ideology, and in Prague in a working meeting of representatives of ideological and foreign departments.⁹⁵ In subsequent years, similar meetings were held in Prague in March 1975, in Warsaw in January 1976, and in Sofia in March 1977.⁹⁶

In the case of the Special Services, there was also a common understanding of the threats resulting from détente. In March 1974, a seminar on “ideological subversion” lasting several days took place in Havana,

⁹³ “Minutes no. 014/71 of the meeting of Council of the MSW held on September 14, 1971,” AIPN, MSW II, Ministry Cabinet. 61, 46.

⁹⁴ “Some forms and methods of anti-socialist activity in Poland and fighting against it,” AIPN, IPN 0296/150, t. 3 (6 X 1972), 167.

⁹⁵ “Materials from a symposium on the current threat to the country from ideological and political subversion and methods to counteract it,” Warsaw, 1975, AIPN, IPN 0296/56, t. 6.

⁹⁶ Regarding these meetings, see the documents in the Polish archives: AAN, PZPR, 850/35; PZPR, 973/700.

attended by high-level representatives of the security organs of Cuba, the USSR, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, and Mongolia. Experience in the fight against “subversion” to date was shared, and the necessity of better coordination of activities on this front was highlighted.⁹⁷ In February 1976, a meeting of the representatives of the intelligence organs of the Soviet bloc was held in Prague. It focused on possible countermeasures against RFE and Radio Liberty, and resulted in a “work plan” including intelligence and propaganda operations.⁹⁸

MSW Department I prepared a plan of action against RFE in June 1974. The starting point was the assumption that the diplomatic and propaganda measures previously taken, along with MSW operational actions, had considerably weakened “subversive” centers, primarily RFE, whose management and employees were driven by fear and uncertainty with regard to the future of the broadcasting station and themselves. The deputy director of Department I, Colonel Leszek Guzik, argued that the “representatives of subversion centers are afraid of another wave of consistent Polish diplomatic activities towards the administrations of the main capitalist countries in question, especially the USA. With equal fears, these representatives are expecting special actions of our apparatus, discrediting their actions [...] This fear not only results from a possible weakening of the efficiency of subversion measures on the territory of Poland as a result of our actions, but first of all from their effects *on their own territory* and strengthening the opponents of cold-war forms of subversion existing also in political and government circles of key countries, especially the USA.”⁹⁹

This reasoning confirms the hypothesis that the earlier propaganda campaigns were targeted not only at Polish society but also at the American opponents of the Radio. According to Department I, the continuation of the previous line of fight against RFE could make it possible to strike a final blow: “Our verified operational data show that each next strong blow at RFE can have a crucial importance in turning the scale towards the opponents of its existence, who for various reasons—often

⁹⁷ Very extensive documentation concerning the seminar (mainly texts of papers presented by individual parties) in several volumes: AIPN, IPN 0296/132, vols. 1–6, IPN 0296/133, vols. 1–3.

⁹⁸ See Documents 21 and 22 in Section 6.

⁹⁹ “Memorandum,” AIPN, IPN 00221/4, 39.

distant from ours—require the liquidation of this broadcasting station. It is known that the advocates of RFE's existence are fearfully expecting 'the return of the next person to Warsaw,' and in some circles the fear of such an event simply verges on psychosis."¹⁰⁰

The opinion advanced by the intelligence service was over-optimistic because by 1974 RFE had the most difficult period behind it. The new legislation passed by the US Congress in October 1973 guaranteed the continuing existence of RFE. Nevertheless, the plan of action prepared by Department I was approved by the MSW leadership as well as by the "Political Leadership" (there is no information concerning the political level on which the plan was discussed).¹⁰¹ The plan's most important element was to bring back to Poland two more intelligence agents working in the Polish section of RFE, and publicize these events for propaganda purposes. One agent was Mieczysław Lach, who has been previously mentioned, and the other was Andrzej Smoliński, an employee of the Research and Analysis Department who prepared economic analyses for the Radio. The MSW became interested in the latter in connection with an action targeted at "undermining the American authorities' confidence in employees of the Polish section of RFE with whom Captain Czechowicz maintained good social contacts."¹⁰² This, it was thought, would deepen the atmosphere of insecurity and mutual distrust in the Munich team.

Smoliński, a former worker at the Office of the Council of Ministers, illegally stayed abroad in 1965. In September 1973, he was offered the opportunity to return to Poland without being made accountable for having worked for Americans. After several months' hesitations, he accepted this offer.¹⁰³ It was initially assumed that the MSW would "keep 'Kryza' [Smoliński's code-name] in the object as a permanent source with the possibility of withdrawing him in a situation convenient to us." For Smoliński, cooperation with the Polish Security Service was to be "the price of re-establishing the good name he had lost as a result of his hostile activity against the country, and enabling him to return to Poland in the future."¹⁰⁴ Within a couple of months of cooperation, "Kryza"

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ "Note," AIPN, IPN 00221/7 (August 25, 1974).

¹⁰² "Report on the recruitment or bringing to the country of the American intelligence agent in RFE codename 'Kryza,'" AIPN, IPN 002221/4 (March 20, 1974), 33.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 34.

managed to pass on a considerable amount of information, especially regarding the atmosphere in the RFE team, reactions to Czechowicz's return, changes in RFE after the US Congress passed new legal legislation. However, when the plan of the next blow at RFE prepared by Department I was approved, the decision was taken to get him to Poland in August 1974, together with his wife, who was also employed by the Radio. The two agents "Kumor" and "Freda," as Mieczysław Lach and his life companion were referred to by the MSW, joined him in November 1974.

As with Czechowicz, details of the ensuing propaganda campaign were worked out in Department I (including the content of the news items broadcast by the Polish Press Agency PAP).¹⁰⁵ In contrast to the Czechowicz case, public opinion was not informed about the connection of the returning RFE employees with the Communist intelligence service. This was intentional. According to the author of the PAP news items, Colonel Henryk Wróblewicz from Department I "the phrase 'according to PAP's information' allows comment on the return in various ways—also to guess that it is a collaborator of our apparatus returning, who has been planted in RFE, which officially does not burden us whatsoever." Other phrases were not accidental either: "the word 'another' may be interpreted that there might be others. It is very important so as to disorganize work of the broadcasting station and aggravate confusion already prevailing there."¹⁰⁶

Conclusions

The mid-1970s were an important turning point, both in the history of RFE's Polish section, and in the fight conducted by the Polish security apparatus against the Radio and other centers of external "political and ideological subversion." Jan Nowak-Jeziorański—for two decades Enemy Number One of the Security Service, and the target of aggressive propaganda campaigns and "special actions"—resigned as Director

¹⁰⁵ See the draft of the PAP news item concerning the Smolińskis and Lach in AIPN, IPN 02221/7. The news was published in the press on September 1 and 24, 1974. See *PRL atakuje Radio "Wolna Europa,"* teksty i ilustracje w wyborze Aliny Grabowskiej, (Wrocław, 2002), 34–36.

¹⁰⁶ "Report on the PAP news," AIPN, IPN 00221/7.

of the Polish Service, citing drastic reductions in the radio's personnel, and what he saw as increasing interference with broadcasts on the part of the US administration. Meanwhile, after 1976 the situation in Poland changed substantially, organized opposition was established, "samizdat" newspapers and books were published, providing Poles with alternative sources of information, and in 1980, following a barrage of strikes, the Solidarity movement attracted millions of workers. Martial law liquidated this legal trade union, but did not prevent the existence of an extensive Solidarity underground. As a matter of course, the security apparatus devoted more and more attention to fighting domestic opponents, while relegating the "subversion from Munich" to the background.

To be sure, until the end of the Communist regime, propaganda attacks on RFE were continued, diplomatic protests were made, and drastic repressive measures were taken against people cooperating with the Radio. Most notably, the death sentence was passed in absentia on the director of the RFE's Polish Section Zdzisław Najder¹⁰⁷, and a sentence of many years imprisonment was imposed on Józef Szaniawski, a journalist passing on information from Poland to Munich. Both were accused of espionage on behalf of the USA, but an important hidden agenda of their trials was to intimidate people who cooperated with RFE.¹⁰⁸

Nonetheless, the early and mid-1970s was the period which saw the most intensive fight against RFE. This was the time when RFE and other centers of foreign "subversion" were considered the main threats to the system and to political stabilization. The thesis can be put forward that the better the control of the internal situation, the more attention and energy was devoted to the fight against external opponents. It was no accident that the fight against RFE reached its peak in the relatively stable 1960s and in the first part of the Gierek decade. The latter period probably saw the greatest degree of social peace in post-war Polish history, with relatively strong support for the authorities. After organized opposition emerged in the second half of the 1970s, the fight against the Radio receded into the background, as had happened in October 1956 and directly afterwards, when the system fell into an acute state of crisis, and re-establishing Party and State control over society took several years. When the internal threats disappeared, or were considerably reduced, the

¹⁰⁷ See Documents 39 and 40 in Part Six.

¹⁰⁸ On the Polish Communists' fight against RFE in the second half of the 1970s and the 1980s, see Machcewicz: *"Monachijska menażeria"*..., op. cit.

tendency emerged to intensify the fight against the external enemy, who was not subjected to the authorities' control and who broke their information monopoly.

The question remains as to what extent the persistent efforts of the Communist authorities, primarily the security apparatus, succeeded in their aim of weakening Radio Free Europe and diminishing its influence in Poland. The OBOP data on RFE's audience ratings that were quoted earlier unambiguously show that the RFE audience increased in times of deepening economic crisis, worsening political atmosphere, and increasing social tensions. The cleverest and most effective actions of the Security Service could not prevent this. It is also worth noting that the Security Service failed to recruit any important members of the RFE Polish Service. All the agents mentioned above were second-rate or even third-rate figures in the Munich team. The Security Service never gained real influence over the decision making or programming of the Polish Service. The officers of Department I claimed to have inflamed internal antagonisms in the Munich team by their operational activities, but there is no evidence that any conflicts were successfully fuelled in a way which would have affected the Radio's functioning. Many interpersonal conflicts were indigenous to the RFE Polish Service and the Security Service simply managed to make marginal use of them in their operations.

The Security Service admittedly achieved some results in the early 1970s through operational measures coupled with propaganda attacks and diplomatic interventions. On the one hand, they increased the feeling of uncertainty over the Radio's future within the Munich team and, on the other hand, they provided ammunition to the opponents of RFE in the West, like Senator Fulbright, who made use of Czechowicz's revelations and the false documents fabricated by the Security Service. In the 1970s, RFE suffered a considerable cut in budget, had to dismiss part of its personnel, and closed down a number of the field offices (that had been virulently attacked by Czechowicz as "espionage outlets"). But RFE was not liquidated, which was the main goal of the campaigns carried out by the Polish authorities.

A secondary purpose of the fight against RFE was to reduce its capability to reach Polish audiences and maintain contacts in Poland. This was attempted by jamming, taking repressive measures against people who listened to the Radio (in the 1950s) or who passed information from inside the country, intercepting correspondence, etc. This area of activity was within the reach of the security apparatus and did not require op-

erations abroad. However, its success was difficult to measure, regardless of the figures presented by the MBP or MSW. Certainly jamming made reception difficult, and repressive measures and propaganda attacks deterred some potential listeners and domestic collaborators. But these measures did not at any time cause a radical reduction in listenership (continuous development of the jamming system up to 1956 shows that it was consistently “leaky”), nor did they deprive RFE of information from inside the country. Until the end of the Communist regime, Radio Free Europe succeeded in breaking the information monopoly of the Communist authorities.

CHAPTER 10

Radio Free Europe's Impact in Romania During the Cold War¹

NESTOR RATESH

"Radio Free Europe has been a lot more important than the armies and the most sophisticated missiles. The 'missiles' that destroyed Communism were launched from Radio Free Europe, and this was Washington's most important investment during the Cold War. I don't know whether the Americans themselves realize this now, seven years after the fall of Communism, but we understand it perfectly well."

Emil Constantinescu, President of Romania from 1997 to 2000, spoke those words in his prepared remarks during an official visit to Prague in the spring of 1997, a few months after his inauguration as President. His metaphor may seem overreaching, but in a Romanian context it was hardly out of place. The role and the impact of Radio Free Europe in Romania during Communist rule have been described in superlative terms by a great number of Romanians. Their testimony matches data on the size and commitment of the Romanian audience. It also explains why RFE was an all-consuming obsession of the Romanian Communist regime for its entire existence. From the extreme anger bordering on paranoia at each critical word uttered on RFE, to the drastic measures taken to limit the audience and its ability to communicate with the Munich head-

¹ Much of this chapter is based on my research in the formerly classified Securitate files on RFE. I was granted selective access to these materials. The documents I was allowed to research total 112 thick volumes, roughly 35,000 pages. The archives of the Foreign Intelligence Service (SIE) and those of the domestic security service (SRI) contain an undetermined number of files still classified and unavailable for research. In addition, the released files had been carefully sanitized and many potentially revealing documents are missing. I also examined files in the archive of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party and talked to many individuals involved in or with knowledge of Securitate plans and actions intended to counter RFE.

quarters, to the unrelenting battles, waged at times with savage brutality, against the radio and its broadcasters, the reaction of the regime was an unintended confirmation of RFE's effectiveness.

Listening to RFE in Romania

Romanians' love affair with Radio Free Europe evolved over many years. RFE's first broadcast in the Romanian language was aired on July 14, 1950. It was second only to the Czech language program launched 10 days earlier. Its audience in those early days was small, due to a shortage of radio receivers, and to heavy jamming of what was a relatively weak signal. Moreover, the programs had a militant edge that was in tune with the terror of the Romanian Stalinist regime and the sharp rhetoric of the early stages of the Cold War. Professional journalists of Romanian descent were hard to find in the West, which is why editorial staff was made up mostly of former diplomats and other exiled intellectuals. The informative value of the broadcasts was relatively low, overwhelmed by the militant component. Such an approach may have alienated some potential listeners.

In the mid to late 1960s the audience increased, as both the political environment and the editorial circumstances improved substantially. Echoing the relative liberalization of the situation within Romania, as well as the regime's newly-asserted policy of independence from the Soviet Union, and encouraged by a change in RFE's editorial policy, the Romanian Service began a promising new era. Under the leadership of Noel Bernard, a Western-educated Romanian journalist, who had served in the early 1950s as service director, programming expanded and became more informative. The crude anti-Communist rhetoric of the early years was replaced by a modulated tone and a professional rigor governed by Western standards of journalism. In addition to domestic and international politics, the broadcasts covered a variety of subjects of interest to the listeners, including culture, music, sports, and human-interest stories. A younger generation of listeners was attracted, and listeners were lured away from other international broadcasters.

Listening to foreign radio stations became a habit for Romanians of all social strata. It was part of their daily routine. While VOA, BBC, Deutsche Welle, and Radio France Internationale were seen more or less as mouthpieces of the government of the countries where the broadcasts

originated, Radio Free Europe was perceived as a “Romanian” radio station playing the role of a surrogate free national medium. Its credibility became proverbial. A trendy quip had it that “if the house across the street is ablaze and Radio Free Europe doesn’t confirm it, then it surely must be a hoax.” Folk wisdom was that, “Everybody listens.” In their book on US-Romanian relations in 1985–1989, Roger Kirk, former US Ambassador to Romania, and Mircea Răceanu, former chief US expert at the Romanian Foreign Ministry, contended that Radio Free Europe and the Voice of America “were by far Romanians’ best sources of information on world events and, in the case of RFE, on Romania as well.” Most government officials, along with the rest of the population, listened to the broadcasts regularly, but Răceanu was amused to see them forming the basis for a Securitate (secret police) report to the president of the country.² A Securitate memo to Ceaușescu informed the president of a 1987 Congressional debate on suspending the Most Favored Nation status to Romania by simply quoting without attribution reports from Washington that Răceanu had heard that very morning on RFE and VOA.

In Romania, according to regular surveys commissioned by RFE/RL’s East European Audience and Opinion Research Department (EEAOR), Radio Free Europe had for decades the largest audience of all international broadcasters, and, in most years, the highest percentage of listenership of all its target countries. That was the case in almost every audience survey that was done since the 1960s. RFE went from a 39% annual reach in the Romanian adult population in 1962 to a 50% reach in 1967. By 1971, its audience in Romania grew to 66%, then dropped at the end of the decade to 53%, and reached highs of over 60% for four consecutive years in the 1982–1985 period. In 1988, RFE’s Romanian audience was estimated at 63%. In that same year, the audience reach of the other two most popular international broadcasters was 31% for the Voice of America and 25% for the BBC.³

It is interesting to note that the Securitate never carried out a survey of its own to measure RFE’s audience. In a 1980 speech to the staff of the

² Roger Kirk and Mircea Răceanu, *Romania versus the United States: Diplomacy of the Absurd, 1985–1989* (St. Martin’s Press, 1994), 128.

³ Data are quoted from the regular surveys done almost every year by RFE/RL’s East European Audience and Opinion Research Department (EEAOR) on samples of Romanians traveling temporarily in the West. See Figure 4 of Appendix C in Part Two. The EEAOR audience research reports cited are available in the RFE/RL Collection, Hoover Archives.

special section code-named “The Ether” dealing with international broadcasting, the head of the Securitate, General Iulian Georgescu, asked rhetorically, “Do we have an idea what the foreign radio stations’ audience is in our country?”⁴ It is unlikely that he really wanted to know; in fact, he dropped the subject as abruptly as he raised it. A report for the year 1980 of the same section “The Ether” noted nonetheless that “the number of those who listen to Radio Free Europe and spread around what they hear is still high,” but without daring to estimate how high.⁵

The audience surveys also showed that RFE’s listenership in Romania was not only large, but unusually devoted and receptive to the broadcasts. In 1971, 65% of the listeners tuned in at least four to six times a week and 41% listened for at least one hour a day. By 1987, the percentage of those tuning in at least four to six times a week remained about the same, with 38% listening for more than one hour. Listener satisfaction was also very high. One study by EEAOR found that in 1988 and 1989 Romanian listeners’ average satisfaction rating of RFE’s programs reached 9.1 on a scale of 1 to 10, an improvement over the 8.7 rating of 1987. VOA, BBC and Deutsche Welle also received very good marks, though noticeably lower than RFE.⁶ Again the Romanians showed more appreciation for international broadcasters than the other East European listeners who, in the same survey, rated all stations less generously.

In a sense, it was surprising that RFE fared so well in Romania, a country with substantially fewer radio receivers per capita than its neighbors. Although reliable data on this issue are lacking, the Free Europe Committee annual report for 1959 stated that, while the highest number of radios per capita was in Czechoslovakia (1 per 4 persons) and Hungary (1 per 5 persons), the *lowest* was in Romania (1 set per 18 persons). It is to be assumed this situation did not change substantially for many years. On the other hand, Romania presented some features favoring international broadcasting. The most prominent among them was the absence of jamming for the last 25 years of the Cold War.

As the Romanian leadership moved towards a more independent line in foreign policy, one of its first goodwill measures towards the West was

⁴ Archive of the National Council for the Study of the Securitate Archive (ACNSAS), file D21/2, 23.

⁵ ACNSAS, file D21/5, 37.

⁶ EEAOR Report, *Listeners’ Satisfaction with RFE, VOA, BBC, and DW/Deutschlandfunk*, May 1990.

to stop jamming as early as 1963. It came to regret this later, particularly in the 1980s. It appears that resuming jamming was a concern of the Romanian Communists as early as in 1973. There is evidence that the secret police insisted all along on restoring jamming of at least RFE. On the margin of a document in the Securitate archives, a highly placed officer wrote as late as 1987, "Let's not give up the idea of making a proposal to resume the jamming at the right time. If the cost issue is brought up, I am sure the Russians will offer it to us for free."⁷ (The Securitate officer must have viewed Romania's relations with Moscow quite optimistically if he entertained such hopes.) According to general Ion Mihai Pacepa, the former head of the Foreign Intelligence Directorate and national security advisor to Nicolae Ceaușescu, the president was of two minds on the issue: he once ordered the rebuilding of the jamming facility "in six months," but then changed his mind and told Pacepa that he "would rather neutralize the Chatterbox from inside than jam it on this side. Jamming will only stir up more interest in it."⁸ As it turned out, jamming was never restored. Some listeners constantly complained about reception difficulties, especially in the 1980s, blaming it on jamming, but the RFE/RL technicians who monitored the signal pointed instead to crowded short-wave bands and other technical difficulties to explain the relatively bad reception.

RFE's achievement in Romania was in part a reflection of the information scarcity that Communism created in all the countries behind the Iron Curtain. In Romania, for decades, a complete information vacuum prevailed. During the 1980s, there was hardly anything worth listening to on national radio or watching on TV. Nicolae Ceaușescu's speeches and the official "drummers" singing the praises of the dictator, his wife and the Party filled most of the airtime. Romanians would put up special antennas to watch Bulgarian TV in Bucharest and Hungarian TV in Transylvania. If the television programs from neighboring Communist nations, poor as they were, could entice Romanians into going to the trouble, risk and expense of installing special antennas, it is understandable that international broadcasting was such an outstanding success in Romania. There are dozens of stories about the many facets of listening to RFE, which was an exercise that went well beyond satisfying the need

⁷ ACNSAS, file 21-D/9, 63.

⁸ Ion Mihai Pacepa, *Red Horizons* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Gateway, 1987), 412.

to learn what was going on in the world and at home. For Romanians, it was a relief to hear somebody telling the truth about their lives and their tormentors. They savored the enjoyment of a nightly clandestine rendezvous with voices from afar saying what they would hardly dare to think, let alone to speak, and took delight in the knowledge that by listening to RFE they could outwit the government.

Communicating with RFE from Romania

Listening to RFE broadcasts was one side of the story; communicating with RFE was the other. *Listeners' Mail*, a weekly program anchored by Noel Bernard, became one of the most popular programs, attracting a high percentage of the audience. More importantly, however, the letters allowed for a lively dialogue with listeners, providing Munich broadcasters with vital feedback. The number of listener letters varied widely from one week to another, depending in part on how many letters were intercepted by the Securitate. One Securitate report boasted, "In the past four months, 349 letters addressed to RFE were intercepted by special unit 'S' (mail censorship), of which 247 had been sent directly to RFE and 102 through intermediaries." However, the report added, "The measures taken so far did not prove fully effective."

The letters from Romania were rarely signed with the author's real name, but the fact that they were mailed from Romania or sent through trusted travelers, usually identifiable foreign visitors, confirmed in most cases their authenticity. They were either letters describing the situation in the country or personal letters exposing human rights abuses, economic hardships and other troubles. Many dealt with the insane personality cult of Ceaușescu himself. Letters were also read out in other programs, especially the *Domestic Bloc*, the Romanian Service's flagship program, and in the human rights program.

The very idea of Romanians daring to write letters critical of the regime to Radio Free Europe and finding ways to send them out of the country infuriated Ceaușescu. According to Pacepa, when Ceaușescu saw a batch of intercepted letters and read some of them, he exploded in anger. "Now Ceaușescu wanted the writers' scalps," recounts Pacepa. He asked that the Securitate find out their names.⁹ Two major decrees result-

⁹ Pacepa, *op.cit.*, 199.

ed from this. The first required the Securitate to obtain handwriting samples from the entire population of Romania in three months! The second compelled every citizen who owned a typewriter to get an authorization from the police. When the authorization was issued, the typewriter had to be presented, so that the police could take samples of its type. At the same time, the renting or lending of a typewriter became a crime. Finally, typewriters belonging to the state were to be registered, and samples of their type kept by the Securitate.

It is not clear what, if anything, was accomplished by such measures. RFE certainly continued to receive letters from Romania. After a secretary in the office of the director of the RFE/RL Central News Department was exposed as a Romanian spy who had provided the Securitate with, among other things, copies of some letters from listeners, measures were taken to keep all letters in the director's safe, with highly restricted access.

In 1988–1989, some of the letters became important documents for the dissident movement that had by then developed in Romania. Some were letters from well-known personalities, others from different groups created *ad hoc*. One trick that the Securitate used was to send letters containing false or slanderous information which, when read on the air, would endanger RFE's credibility or even expose it to potential libel suits. Among other tricks, the "D" [disinformation] section would send RFE letters signed with the names of deceased people, in the hope that they would be aired so the Securitate could ridicule the radio. There were instances when the ploy worked, but this did not affect the size and dedication of RFE's listenership.

RFE: A Dictator's Nightmare

In the 1950s, RFE Romanian broadcasts were not yet a major problem for the Communist regime, nowhere near the challenge they would become in later years. The audience was relatively small, and intense jamming made listening very uncomfortable and frustrating. The Communists were nonetheless nervous and appalled. Preserved in the Romanian Communist Party archives are many pages of transcribed RFE broadcasts of the late 1950s and early 1960s, heavily annotated by Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, the first, Soviet-installed Party chief. He was an avid reader of those transcripts, engaging in a peculiar dialogue with the broadcast-

ers that ranged from interjections and insults to elaborate rebuttals. “You fools!,” “No kidding!,” “So what!,” “It truly hurts you, doesn’t it!,” “You lust for it!,” “I pity you!” and on and on. He cheered with mock delight when RFE quoted from the Party newspaper, noting that “It was very good that you cited entire passages from *Scintea*. You are doing us a service indirectly, as any person of good will would value the care that the Party and the government show, the contrast with the past.” Gheorghiu-Dej would become really angry when his own person was attacked or ridiculed in RFE’s broadcasts. He wrote a long riposte to an item that called him “a flunkey of the Kremlin” and described one of his speeches as a “cock and bull story.” In spite of ascribing the piece to RFE’s supposed “helpless hatred,” he took the time to explain at length to his imaginary audience how “free and master of their own destiny” the Romanian people had become under his rule.

Aside from such neurotic chitchat, Gheorghiu-Dej ordered tough measures to discourage listening to RFE, to repress listeners, especially those who were caught spreading news heard on the radio, and to prevent any communication from Romania reaching the broadcasters. The Securitate files of the 1950s and the early 1960s include considerable material about RFE, mainly documents officially released by the Free Europe Committee or the Crusade for Freedom, but little information from inside the radio. Such information was probably obtained from other Communist secret services, in particular from Hungary and Poland. In July 1959, a five-point plan was drawn up aiming at “penetrating this target [RFE].” Two years later, nothing seemed to have happened, and various highly placed officers addressed all kinds of reproaches to their subordinates for not being able to infiltrate the radio.

By 1963, not much had changed. The need to infiltrate RFE appeared to have become a bit less pressing, as that same year the Romanian government stopped jamming RFE’s broadcasts, which lost some of their sharp edge as the Romanian Communists began to embrace a more independent line in their foreign policy. In 1964, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej died and Nicolae Ceaușescu succeeded him. For a few years, the new leader tolerated considerable domestic liberalization, to accompany his more independent foreign policy. It was a challenge for RFE to distinguish between what was real in the new Romanian approach and what was propaganda. RFE’s Romanian broadcasts had to carefully acknowledge the changes and encourage the regime to move further away from the Soviet model, while at the same time keeping a critical eye on de-

velopments inside Romania. That stance was a substantial change from the clear-cut condemnation of previous years and appeared to please the new leader. The regime may have thought that RFE could be kept under control, even courted into some kind of cooperation.¹⁰ At the time, there were a few short-lived overtures from Bucharest. Noel Bernard was insistently invited to visit Romania, a prospect that tempted him, given the fact that he had left his native country at an early age and never returned. In the end, he was directed from Washington to turn down the invitation.

The wooing did not last long, as conditions in Romania deteriorated. In the early 1970s, a brazen personality cult began to develop around Ceaușescu, and the more liberal policies faded away. Although RFE was prompt in noticing the trend in its early stages and denouncing it, the West overall showed little public concern, still receiving the Ceaușescus on foreign trips with great pomp, in the hope that Romanian dissent within the Communist bloc would snowball into a centrifugal movement in Eastern Europe as a whole. RFE was markedly less hopeful, although it continued to examine favorably Romania's foreign policy moves, covering fully and fairly Ceaușescu's trips to Western countries.

This was the climate in 1978, when Ceaușescu made a state visit to Washington at the invitation of President Carter. It was presented in the Romanian official press as the jewel in Ceaușescu's diplomatic crown. As RFE's Washington correspondent, I covered that visit, beginning with a live broadcast from the Rose Garden and ending with reports on the ill-fated, protest-filled stop in New York, the last leg of Ceaușescu's six-city tour of the US. The whole trip required informed journalists to strike a balance between the glorious official appearances and the tensions that manifested themselves behind the scenes. Although press briefings yielded little information other than that offered in the official communiqués, off the record there were clear indications of the strains created by the new emphasis on human rights issues that the Carter administration had introduced in its foreign policy. Radio Free Europe seized the opportunity to let Romanians know that the growing discrepancy between the regime's laudable foreign policy and its repressive domestic course was known in the West in spite of all the honors that Ceaușescu had been receiving there. By doing that RFE served well its Romanian listeners, but angered officialdom in Bucharest beyond any reasonable expectation.

¹⁰ See Document 6 in Part Six.

From what we know, Ceaușescu never bothered to argue with RFE in the privacy of his office, as his predecessor did. No such idle talk has been found so far in the archives. He was, however, no less obsessed by the impact of RFE, and the obsession became truly overwhelming during the last decade of his rule. He turned to violence, both as a means of frightening the broadcasters into obedience to him and his regime, and simply as senseless, brutal revenge. General Pacepa's defection, three months after Ceaușescu's US trip, stirred an anti-American hysteria in Bucharest that whetted the murderous appetite of the ruling clique, and opened a period of unprecedented Romanian-sponsored terrorism in the West. RFE was the main target, but not the only one. Anti-Ceaușescu émigrés and Securitate officers who defected to different Western countries also came under attack. An arsenal of explosive devices, parcel bombs, car accidents, alleged radiological weapons, poisonous fountain pens, beatings, and stabbings was unleashed against critics and opponents of the regime who took refuge in the West.

"He especially hates Radio Free Europe," wrote Pacepa about Nicolae Ceaușescu in the extraordinary account of his years at the top of the Romanian espionage service, in the immediate entourage of the dictator, which appeared in the West in 1987, nine years after his dramatic defection to the United States. *Red Horizons*, in its 445 pages, detailed Ceaușescu's intimate involvement in the Securitate's criminal operations abroad, many of his top-secret orders, and the murderous inclinations that dominated his conduct. Radio Free Europe featured prominently in the book as one of the dictator's main fixations. For Ceaușescu, Pacepa wrote, Radio Free Europe's Romanian broadcasts were "CIA operations designed to damage his personal credibility and prestige. They are his worst nightmares."¹¹

The Long Arm of the Securitate

The vast impact of Radio Free Europe in Romania was certainly noticed and at times even exaggerated by the regime. This reaction reflected not just the real danger that it sensed, but also the paranoid nature of Romania's leader. Every regime in the satellite countries felt serious apprehension when confronted with the challenge that RFE presented for the

¹¹ Pacepa, op.cit., 224.

supremacy of the Communist Party, its monopoly of information, and its totalitarian control over society. All made an effort to limit the Radio's influence on the population, mostly by jamming its broadcasts, intimidating and at times repressing its listeners, preventing as many links between their citizens and RFE's broadcasters as possible. Most tried to infiltrate the radio (some succeeded better than others), and some planned violent action against it. The Czechoslovak secret service considered at one point placing a bomb at RFE's headquarters, and Bulgaria, in September 1978, in London, staged the well-known "umbrella assassination" that killed Gheorghe Markov, an RFE freelance contributor and sharp critic of the Communist regime of his country.

It was an irony that "maverick" Romania, the least obedient Soviet satellite, the country visited by two US presidents during the Cold War, would show the most aggressive attitude toward this "American radio." As Ceaușescu was crisscrossing the West, collecting honors and playing the respected statesman, within his inner circle he plotted feverishly against Radio Free Europe. Although constrained in the 1960s and 1970s by the desire to get recognition and support from the West for their independence from the Soviet Union, the Romanian Communists nevertheless showed little restraint when it came to protecting their absolute power. The regime did not shy away from repressive action, abuse and prosecution of RFE listeners, or tough measures against dissent.

In the 1980s, when relations with the West soured and the domestic situation worsened, international broadcasting became much more than a nuisance for the regime, and at that point the big guns were turned against RFE, its infrastructure and several of its top broadcasters. It coincided with the recruitment by the Securitate of the infamous international terrorist Ilich Ramirez Sanchez, alias Carlos the Jackal. According to Securitate officers involved in the recruitment, the initial reason seems to have been Ceaușescu's intent to have Carlos kill Pacepa, but the terrorist was seemingly not eager to take on that assignment, arguing that he did not have the capability to carry out such a demanding task in the United States. The Securitate asked him to act against RFE instead, and this assignment he reportedly accepted, in exchange for large amounts of money, arms and ammunitions, false passports, foreign identity cards and driving licenses, as well as personal favors.¹²

¹² I have a copy of a hand-written report by the Securitate officer who, on orders from his superiors, including the Minister of the Interior, established the first

During the last 15 years of Communism, several violent episodes and unexplained deaths were registered within RFE's Romanian Service. There were strong suspicions of involvement by the Securitate in these misfortunes. General Pacepa was able to shed light on some incidents, but he defected before most of them took place.

Violence against Romanian Service Broadcasters

The earliest suspicious death in the Romanian Service dates back to 1975. The youngest and "trendiest" broadcaster, Cornel Chiriac, was stabbed to death by a young fellow he met one evening in a bar. The 17-year-old criminal was caught and prosecuted. He insisted he killed his buddy because he had made homosexual advances and had become violent. No other motive could be established. Chiriac, a talented musician and a charming disc jockey, had for several years anchored on RFE an immensely popular program of music for young Romanians. He introduced a whole generation of listeners to Western music, occasionally interspersing political comments in his presentation. His audience adored Cornel as much as the regime hated him. This raised strong suspicion that the Securitate may have instigated his murder, but there is no evidence of this in Chiriac's Securitate file.

However, the Securitate archives document the Ceaușescu regime's aim to injure or kill other RFE Romanian Service staff. Noel Bernard himself was a primary target. Bernard was the longest serving director of RFE's Romanian Service and the most popular. During his 16 years on the job after he rejoined RFE, he not only managed the service, but

contact with Carlos. Lieutenant-Colonel Sergiu Nica met Carlos and several of his underlings in Prague, in August 1979, in order to ascertain "his attitude towards Romania and potential ways he could help us in neutralizing the traitor Pacepa." The following year, Nica arranged a meeting with Carlos for the new Head of the Foreign Intelligence Service, General Nicolae Pleșiță. The Carlos group obtained facilities in Romania and entered into a close relationship with the Securitate. Carlos's mother reportedly spent more than a year in the internationally renowned Romanian geriatric institute Ana Aslan. According to Nica, this close relationship lasted until June 1982. Nica mysteriously died shortly after he wrote his 5-page testimony. See Document 26 in Part Six. See also Richard Cummings, *Cold War Radio: The Dangerous History of American Broadcasting in Europe, 1950–1989* (Jefferson, N.C: McFarland and Company, Inc., 2009), 92–170.

was also its main editorialist. His almost daily commentaries were balanced, reasoned, civil, elegantly written, and delivered in a clear, imposing voice. It was radio journalism at its best. He was a hero in Romania, an almost fabled character.¹³

“Bernard was Ceaușescu’s *bête noire*,” Pacepa wrote.¹⁴ He reported that, on July 22, 1978, the dictator gave him the order to kill Bernard by radiation with a device obtained from the Soviets, using radioactive thallium isotopes that, according to the description received by the Securitate from Moscow, caused a galloping form of cancer. Ceaușescu called the device “Radu.” “Give him Radu!” was the dictator’s order to Pacepa.¹⁵ Soon, Pacepa left Romania never to return. 25 years later, he said in an interview to a Romanian newspaper that Ceaușescu’s order to kill Bernard was the last straw that made him ask for political asylum in the United States.

Noel Bernard’s file in the Foreign Intelligence Service’s archive is incomplete: dozens of documents are missing, as can be seen from a comparison of the file summary with the file itself. Starting in 1967, a large number of informers and agents spied on Bernard, assembling a large body of data on his life, family and friends, his standing within RFE/RL, his home, places he frequented (especially restaurants), his daily routine, and much more. The file contains detailed sketches of his home, and maps of the neighborhood, with precise directions how to get there.

Bernard’s Securitate file contains two documents that are especially revealing. One is a cable from the resident Securitate officer attached to the Romanian embassy in Bonn dated October 22, 1980 and entitled “Concerning the compromising and liquidation of Noel Bernard.” The last paragraph of the decoded cable reads as follows: “Through the possibilities available to us, measures were taken to implement the ac-

¹³ One anecdote that made the rounds in the 1970s went like this: Ceaușescu decided one day to make an impromptu visit to a remote village. The villagers seemed rather unimpressed by his presence. Intrigued, he stopped a couple of peasants and asked them whether they knew who he was. “Nope,” came the answer. “But wait, it can’t be, you certainly do know me,” said the visitor. “I am the one who speaks to you quite often, who tells you everything you should know. Here in your village you can hear me on the radio.” “You don’t say! Good gracious! Of course we know you! Welcome to our village, Mr. Noel Bernard.”

¹⁴ Pacepa, *op.cit.*, 413.

¹⁵ Ion Mihai Pacepa, *Cartea Neagra a Securitatii (The Black Book of the Securitate)*, vol. 3 (Bucharest: Omega, 1999).

tion ordered by the chief architect.” (The “Chief Architect” was one of Ceaușescu’s code names: “Chief Guide” was the other.) Roughly three months later, Bernard was admitted to a Munich hospital and diagnosed with lung cancer. He underwent surgery that affected his vocal cords and his ability to return to work. On the copy of a news story from a Romanian exile publication called BIRE, reporting on Bernard’s health and the interim arrangements at RFE to replace him, the Securitate colonel who coordinated the operation against Bernard wrote the following: “The information published by BIRE confirms that the measures undertaken by us are beginning to yield results.” Noel Bernard passed away on December 23, 1981, the first of three directors of RFE’s Romanian Service in a row to die of cancer in less than seven years.

There is little evidence to suggest that the death of Bernard’s successor, Mihai Cismarescu, was the result of foul play. His Securitate file does not contain the fanatical, hate-filled language that Noel Bernard (and later Vlad Georgescu) inspired in Bucharest, and nor is there any reference to “neutralization,” “annihilation,” “liquidation,” or the like. His widow, Mrs. Gertrude Fleischer Cismarescu, does not suspect criminal action, and is firmly convinced that his cancer developed naturally. She told me point-blank, “People sometime die a natural death.” Unanswered questions still remain, however, and new evidence may surface in the future to shed more light on the case.

The Case of Vlad Georgescu

Cismarescu headed the Romanian Service only one year. Vlad Georgescu, a prestigious historian and former dissident, succeeded him. Georgescu had a long history of trouble with the Securitate. He had been harassed since 1974 for criticizing the Communist regime. Accused of treason in 1977, he was jailed for writing several anti-Ceaușescu essays and passing them on to the US Embassy for publication abroad. Following repeated intercessions by the US government on his behalf, in February 1979 he was allowed to travel to Washington, where he promptly asked for political asylum. Shortly afterwards, he became a contributor to RFE’s broadcasts and two years later was appointed associate director of the Romanian Service in the wake of Bernard’s death.

Georgescu served as director of the service for almost six years. The Securitate had no illusions about his directorship, and from the beginning

started to “prepare the conditions for his *complete neutralization*.” This phrase appears for the first time in a four-page plan of action dated June 25, 1982. It meant liquidation. In the following years, however, there were doubts that Georgescu would stay on the job, given his often-reiterated desire to return to the United States to teach at an American university. That hope put the Securitate’s plans on hold for years. Meanwhile, Georgescu was harassed, advised to leave RFE “while it is not too late,” and given warnings: “You took on a job but you don’t know how it will end.” His file runs to five volumes and over 1,600 pages, but close to 300 pages are missing, including almost everything pertaining to the last year of his life. As in Bernard’s case, numerous informers were sent to Munich to investigate his situation, his physical and mental health, his relationships inside and outside the radio, his family circumstances and marital relations, his daily routine, where and how he was spending his free time and other such “operational” particulars. Special attention was paid to his ground floor apartment, which was deemed to present “security risks.” The exact position of each piece of furniture, especially his desk, was also of great interest, usually in relation to the windows and doors. Informers brought back detailed descriptions and sketches. At the same time, a vast campaign to discredit Georgescu as a crypto-Communist was mounted, involving certain right-wing figures and publications brought in by the Securitate, but to no avail. Georgescu regularly received threatening telephone calls and letters, including threats to his eight-year-old son. For years, the Securitate followed the same routine, preparing for a possible order from the “Chief Guide” (Ceașescu) to “neutralize” the target.

In the fall of 1987, Pacepa’s book *Red Horizons* appeared in print. The question facing RFE was whether or not to serialize it on air. Georgescu decided that such a book should definitely be brought to the attention of RFE’s Romanian listeners. He wrote an editorial offering his first assessment of the book and letting the listeners know that in the following weeks excerpts from the book would be translated and read over the radio. Not long after this broadcast, Georgescu’s sister-in-law arrived in Munich on a private visit. She said that a Securitate officer had asked her before she left to deliver the following message to Georgescu: “If you broadcast Pacepa, you will die.” Georgescu refused to let himself be intimidated. The Ceașescus’ nightmare that the book would find its way into Romania was about to become reality. At that point, Georgescu’s five-volume Securitate file drops suspiciously silent. By comparing the original summary of the file with what was made available for research,

it becomes obvious that more than 170 pages were deleted from the fifth volume.

Georgescu disregarded the threats and went ahead with his decision to broadcast excerpts from Pacepa's book. The first part was aired on January 4, 1988. Twelve long selections from the book were read in Romanian translation over three weeks. As expected, the broadcasts aroused huge interest among Romanians. For Ceaușescu, it was a shocking present for his 70th birthday, which fell on January 26, 1988.

The day before Ceausecu's birthday, Georgescu received a letter from a previously unknown organization called "The Group in the Service of the Marshal." The name suggested an extreme right-wing organization purporting to avenge Marshal Ion Antonescu, the wartime leader of Romania, who had been allied with Nazi Germany and who was later executed as a war criminal. The letter claimed that the "group" had decided to sentence to death the former Romanian king, adding that more death sentences would follow since "there are still many traitors running around." Georgescu had no doubt that the letter had been concocted in Bucharest with the aim of frightening him and his colleagues. The Securitate had already used right-wing groups as fronts when sending threats to émigrés who opposed the regime. Securitate files are full of letters prepared in Bucharest and sent to Romanian embassies in the West, with precise instructions on how they were to be retyped, on what kind of paper and with what characters, and from which city they were to be mailed. The letter sent to Georgescu was postmarked Paris, and enclosed photographs of King Michael and Queen Anna. In one photograph, the King had a bullet hole in his head and blood dripping down his face.¹⁶

Vlad Georgescu experienced digestive problems in the first months of 1988. In July, a brain tumor was discovered. He had surgery to remove

¹⁶ Michael had lived in Switzerland since his forced abdication at the end of 1947. His relations with RFE were limited, consisting mainly of an annual Christmas message to the Romanian people. Two days after Georgescu received his letter, a letter signed the "Eagles of the Islamic Revolution," written in Arabic, and addressed to "Mr. Pell [the RFE/RL President], Free Europe Radio" arrived at the Munich headquarters. The letter announced: "We have set out eliminating agents of American and Zionist imperialism. And now it is your turn and the turn of the agents who direct the national sections of your broadcast system." The organization was unknown, but the threat was clear. One hypothesis at the time was that the Arabic letter was instigated by the Securitate.

the tumor, which was found to belong to a very aggressive and usually fatal type of cancer. Following unsuccessful treatment at the National Institute of Health in Washington, he returned to Munich, where he died a week later, on November 13, 1988. He told me during this period that he was convinced the Securitate was responsible for his death.

The Carlos Connection

Georgescu's death closed a decade of terror against RFE/RL perpetrated by the Romanian secret police and its hired hands. Directors of the Romanian Service were not the only targets. Several prominent broadcasters and freelance contributors reporting on Romanian domestic issues were also physically attacked, and the RFE/RL headquarters in Munich, Germany, was bombed. In several of these violent events there was a proven or suspected link to Arab terrorists or to Carlos.

The first attack on an RFE broadcaster that can be traced to Arab assassins targeted Monica Lovinescu on November 21, 1976. Lovinescu, a much-admired cultural commentator stationed in Paris, had had, with her husband, Virgil Ierunca, tremendous influence on generations of Romanian writers and artists inside and outside Romania. Returning home one evening, two dark-skinned men suddenly appeared from the bushes and approached her as she was about to open the door to her home. After exchanging a few words with her in broken French, ostensibly to establish her identity, the men began to strike her on the head until she fell unconscious. According to her account, when she regained consciousness she was lying in a hospital bed. Fortunately the wounds were not serious. She was released from the hospital four days later and resumed her broadcasts. In his book *Red Horizons*, Pacepa disclosed that Ceaușescu had ordered him to give Mrs. Lovinescu a "memorable lesson," though taking care not to overdo it. Palestinians were supposed to carry out the beating, and they did, according to Pacepa. Dissident writer Paul Goma, who arrived in Paris the day after the attack on Mrs. Lovinescu, recounted at a news conference that a Securitate officer had told him just before his departure from Bucharest that "the arm of the revolution is very long and can reach everywhere. A sign of this will wait you in Paris." The assault on Monica Lovinescu was preceded by threats whose origin could easily be guessed, if not legally established. Lovinescu's aggressors were never apprehended.

A flood of threatening letters descended on RFE's Romanian Service at the beginning of the 1980s and continued through the entire decade. They supposedly came from extreme right-wing organizations, mainly the former Legionnaires, better known in the West as members of the Iron Guard, living in West European countries, mostly in Spain and Canada. The letters were signed "Grupa V" and used typical language of the inter-war extreme right, including anti-Semitic slurs. As noted above, Securitate archives indicate that such letters were written in Bucharest and transmitted to Romanian embassies abroad with instructions about to whom and how they were to be mailed.

The letters were often followed by deeds. In early February 1981, three prominent exiled Romanians, including Paul Goma and Șerban Orescu,¹⁷ all contributors to Romanian Service broadcasts, received parcel bombs hidden between the covers of copies of Khrushchev's memoirs. None of the three was seriously hurt. Later that same month, RFE/RL's Munich headquarters was bombed. On February 21 at 21:47 a powerful explosion shook the building on the side where the Czechoslovak Service was located. A large section of the building was wrecked. Four Czech employees were wounded, one seriously. Windows were shattered within a radius of two miles. Fortunately, it was a Saturday night and only a skeleton staff was on duty at the radio. The bombing attracted the attention of the international press, and underscored the grave perils facing the radio and its broadcasters.

For a long time, it was impossible to ascertain who was behind the bombing. Suspicion initially fell on the KGB or the Czechoslovak secret services. The Romanians were assumed to have lacked the means for such a complex operation. However, after the fall of Communism, credible evidence of Romanian involvement surfaced in the East German and other Communist secret police files. The post-Communist Romanian governments were for years reluctant to expose the Securitate's secrets, especially concerning its foreign operations. In July 1992, the then chief of the post-Communist Romanian Intelligence Service, Virgil Măgureanu, conceded that the Securitate was behind the parcel bombs. Other Romanian sources maintained that the Carlos group was also involved in the operation. It was only in November 2001 that Romanian President Ion Iliescu said that, "As proved by the current investigation, [the bombing of

¹⁷ Orescu would later become a valued RFE staff commentator.

RFE/RL] was coordinated by the terrorist Carlos, on orders from the former Securitate.” The Securitate reportedly paid Carlos one million dollars for his services.¹⁸

The most vicious personal violence during 1981 was directed against Romanian lead broadcaster Emil Georgescu, chief anchor of the *Domestic Bloc* program. According to Pacepa, the Ceaușescus hated Emil Georgescu and reputedly asked Pacepa to kill him. Georgescu had been the victim of a suspicious car accident back in October 1976, when an automobile suddenly approached and repeatedly rammed his car, causing considerable damage, but no injuries. The driver jumped out of his car and ran to a waiting automobile that sped off in the opposite direction. The police discovered that the car involved in the incident had been rented by a man with forged French documents, but his real identity was never determined.

Emil Georgescu remained on the Securitate’s radar screen until his death. After repeated threats, purportedly coming from the legionnaires and signed “Grupa V,” he was accosted and beaten by two young men as he was walking his dog in an alley behind his apartment building on the evening of January 26, 1981. The Securitate files contain a full report from an agent code-named “Helmut” who arranged and observed the beating. It describes the event in great detail, and explains that the attack had to stop when neighbors showed up. The officer in charge of the case wrote the following note on the report: “The ensuing situation compels us to use a different scheme, tactic, environment and means in order to achieve the annihilation of Iago [Emil Georgescu’s codename].”¹⁹ The word “annihilation” was used repeatedly by the Securitate, in alternation with “neutralization,” the meaning of both words being “killing.”

And indeed, six months later, on the morning of July 28, 1981, the scenario was different. Georgescu was attacked by two men as he headed towards the garage of his apartment building and stabbed 22 times. His wife Lydia was able to call for help and, based on the information she supplied, the German Police quickly apprehended two French citizens, who were convicted and sentenced to prison. While the court

¹⁸ See Cummings, Chapter 4, “Carlos the Jackal and the Bombing of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty,” in *Cold War Radio*, op. cit.

¹⁹ Emil Georgescu, like Noel Bernard and Vlad Georgescu, has two or three different code names in the Securitate files. It seems that “Iago” was assigned to him when the decision was made to kill him. (At the same stage, Bernard had received the codename “The Jackal,” and Vlad Georgescu, “The Bastard.”)

could not establish a clear link to the Securitate, the judge mentioned the possibility of a Romanian connection. Pacepa reported later that, during a visit to Paris in January 1985, as guest of the French Directorate for Internal Security (DST), he learned that the two Frenchmen carried out the attempted assassination of Emil Georgescu on orders from Carlos.²⁰

In the meantime, the Securitate staged a disinformation campaign purporting to prove that Emil Georgescu had been involved in shady dealings, and that the attempted murder was nothing but a settling of scores between dishonest partners. Georgescu's Securitate file (three volumes containing more than 1,000 pages²¹) contains copies of forged letters sent to RFE/RL management and broadcasters, newspapers, the German authorities, the CIA and FBI directors, members of Congress, and even the President of the United States. They were meant to "expose" Emil Georgescu as a criminal, and even a Securitate agent. Many Securitate officers, spies and informers were involved in this effort, which for a time scored an undeserved success.

Emil Georgescu survived the attack but it took him four months to recover. He returned to work, but shortly afterwards retired. That did not end the Securitate's vendetta against him. A document in Georgescu's Securitate file dating from late 1982 set as the "next phase" the task of continuing to gather "timely data on his situation and activity at the office and in his private life necessary for undertaking the measures for his neutralization."²² Agent "Helmut" reappeared in mid-March 1983, surveying Georgescu's home and the layout of the Radio, "setting for himself several benchmarks and succeeding in taking a few pictures." Four months later, agent "Konrad" reported that "the guards [at Georgescu's home] have been withdrawn, although he continues to carry a pistol." On August 8, 1984, a document cited "an informative-operative combination" by which Georgescu "was contacted directly by a trusted foreign source of ours." The document concluded somewhat cryptically, "We will

²⁰ Pacepa, *Cartea Neagra a Securitatii*, op. cit., 184.

²¹ The three volumes of Emil Georgescu's Securitate file, declassified by the Foreign Intelligence Service, are now in the custody of the National Council for the Study of the Securitate Archive, under the reference SIE 32.

²² "Nota privind pe EMIL GEORGESCU, angajat al postului de radio 'Europa Libera,'" ("Note regarding EMIL GEORGESCU, employee of Radio Free Europe"), CNSAS, Nr. 0027919, 07.07.1982.

watch with due attention the reactions to the measures undertaken and the way the personal situation evolves.” Six months later, Emil Georgescu died of cancer.

1989: The Fateful Year

I succeeded Vlad Georgescu as acting director of the Romanian Service on January 1, 1989, as the Ceaușescu regime entered a terminal crisis fueled by a growing and assertive dissident movement, discord in the Communist Party, and the general discontent of the population. Radio Free Europe became a conduit for the ferment leading to the revolution that toppled the dictatorship at the end of the year. Not only did RFE keep its Romanian audience informed about the changes in the neighboring countries throughout 1989, but, more than ever, gave a voice to the voiceless inside Romania. The dissidents’ open letters, statements and interviews took pride of place in the broadcasts. It was mainly through RFE that the protesters communicated with their compatriots. Doina Cornea, the French teacher from Cluj, perhaps the best-known opponent of the regime, was featured prominently and frequently in the broadcasts. Celebrated writers and artists and other daring citizens sent their messages to Munich, often through convoluted channels and uncommon means, whose suppression by the secret police was promptly made known to the Romanian public through RFE’s broadcasts. The far-reaching “Letter of the Six,” a statement sharply critical of Ceaușescu and his policies signed by six prominent Communist veterans, including two former Party First Secretaries, was sent through the US Embassy for broadcast on RFE. This highly significant public sign of a rift within the Communist party was aired on March 11, 1989. Although its impact on the Party apparatus was weak, it encouraged dissent and opposition in Romanian society at large, and led to a remarkable increase in the number and bluntness of the protest letters received by RFE from Romania. Several underground organizations sent their manifestos, among them the somewhat mysterious National Salvation Front.²³

²³ The leaders of the National Salvation Front, who took over the government after Ceaușescu’s demise, denied any links to the pre-revolution namesake organization.

With 12 hours of airtime daily, RFE's Romanian Service was able to cover extensively developments related to the situation within Romania, as well as the widespread international condemnation of the regime and its policies. 1989 saw a complete reversal of the West's approach to Romania, with Ceaușescu becoming a pariah in the international community. This fact was brought to the attention of the Romanian audience, thereby increasing the momentum for change.

The Securitate did not stand still either. Threatening letters, phone calls and messages kept the broadcasters on guard. A couple of Securitate officers defected to the West and reported to the US and German authorities that Ceaușescu, infuriated by RFE's broadcasting of the "Letter of the Six," had ordered that several RFE broadcasters who criticized him daily be "eliminated." In July 1989, a defector told the German authorities that a killer team had been sent to Munich to murder two of the principal broadcasters on RFE's *Domestic Bloc*, Neculai Constantin Munteanu, the program's anchor, and Emil Hurezeanu, who had formerly been one of the presenters of the Pacepa book excerpts. The two were sent away from Munich on vacation for several weeks to protect them. There was a similar alarm in October of that year. I myself received on March 6, 1989 a message from a Securitate general, relayed through a prominent Romanian public figure with whom I had been closely associated during my last year in Romania. The blunt message read, "Tell Ratesh to hurry back to Washington otherwise he will meet Vlad Georgescu's fate." I disregarded the threat, although I did return to Washington at the end of October that year for other reasons. Even though tensions were high, no violent acts took place in 1989, probably because of the precautionary measures taken by RFE/RL's security department, and perhaps also because the Securitate had reduced operational capabilities in Germany due to the defection of several of its officers and the new situation in Romania.

Opposition to Ceaușescu accelerated in the second part of December 1989, when anti-Communist demonstrations began in the city of Timișoara. News from Timișoara was initially in short supply, and came from unreliable sources, and the Romanian Service was reluctant to carry it in its broadcasts. But as soon as the news could be corroborated, it was aired, though with a short delay. RFE was the first to let Romanians know about the massacre that took place in Timișoara when the army opened fire on peaceful demonstrators and dozens of people were killed (RFE avoided citing the highly inflated number of casualties reported by some Western media). Timișoara was the turning point. On hearing the news,

people took to the streets in other cities, and then in Bucharest itself. At that moment, RFE went live and stayed on air until the revolution was victorious. No other media did this.

RFE, like the rest of the Western world, did not anticipate a violent uprising in Romania. It expected to contribute to a peaceful process of change similar to those taking place in other Communist countries. RFE's broadcasters tried to adhere to Western journalistic standards, although impartiality fell by the wayside in the sense that they were unquestionably opposed to the totalitarian regime and in favor of democracy. There were instances of unnecessary mockery of the dictator or abrasive language, but the broadcasts never instigated demonstrations or incited people to violence. They maintained a calm, matter-of-fact manner of reporting, except perhaps at some points during the days and nights of live coverage of the revolution. When momentous developments were in progress, excitement may have affected some broadcasters. By opening the microphone to callers from Romania, RFE was exposed to the possibility of broadcasting misleading information or shrewd manipulation. It was a risk the broadcasters assumed, rightly or wrongly, for the sake of full coverage of a historical turn of events. But overall, the RFE Romanian Service in 1989 was the only credible source of balanced, clear information at a time of revolutionary fervor, confusion, violence, deception, and enthusiasm.

CHAPTER 11

Ceaușescu's War against Our Ears

GERMINA NAGAT

*"Dear comrades from Censorship, please let this postcard go.
We love music, and music has no fault."*¹

If censorship can be defined as "the knot that binds knowledge and power,"² then the secret services established under communist regimes provide the best illustration of censorship at its being most distorted and pathological. Although complete state control of information through censorship and state propaganda is common in any totalitarian regime, it was a major task of the secret services under communist rule. Although its main purpose was to maintain the political status quo, its scope was unprecedented and the instruments of control were extreme. The iron-clad control applied to any information coming from any source, especially from abroad. The communist censorship worked underground, crossing the borders of its own jurisdiction, and employing the devious and brutal means of the secret police. To achieve the goal of total control, everything was allowed and all laws could be broken. The game had no rules, only exceptions.

The censorship of the Romanian secret service, the Securitate, was prompted by two key elements. One was the increasingly bad internal situation, and the other was the growing popularity of Western radio stations, especially Radio Free Europe. As daily life became increasingly difficult, Ceaușescu's regime lost the support and the tolerance of its peo-

¹ Message sent by a Romanian teenager to Radio Free Europe's music program, presented by Andrei Voiculescu.

² A good introduction to the history of censorship, in which the particular case of the communist secret services could eventually be integrated, is Sue Curry Jansen's book, *Censorship—The Knot That Binds Power and Knowledge* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

ple, many of whom began turning to new sources of information. This led to Radio Free Europe's acquiring amazing credibility and influence among Romanians. As a result, the Securitate's policy regarding foreign radio stations, especially Radio Free Europe, moved from routine surveillance to open war, waged both inside and outside the country. The Securitate stopped at nothing to stem the spread of information inside the borders, and annihilate its sources abroad. By the end of the 1970s, violence was already the Securitate's favourite *modus operandi* against employees and listeners to Radio Free Europe. By making victims of both journalists and listeners, the Securitate created a complicity in suffering that propelled Radio Free Europe into a leading position in the 1989 revolution. The attempt at complete censorship failed gloriously; it was Radio Free Europe that broadcast the Romanian Revolution live.

It took the Securitate a long time to acknowledge the impact of Western radio stations. Initially, oversight of Western broadcasters was routinely assigned to the Division of External Information (DIE), whose main task was to keep tabs on Romanian emigrants, especially journalists, and on their families who had remained in Romania. However, by the end of the 1970s, Western radio had become a major preoccupation of Division 1 (internal counterintelligence).

Radio Free Europe was the main enemy in the ideological war of the Romanian communist regime against Western media. The ratings of one progressed during the confrontation alongside the brutality of the other. The secret service could not forbid people's preferences, or the existence of radio broadcasts, but it correctly understood the link between information and political control.

The Romanian Service of Radio Free Europe began broadcasting in 1950. After 1973, RFE was openly funded by the United States Congress through the Board for International Broadcasting. As stated in 1973, its main function was to promote the application of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 19). Nonetheless, the Romanian secret police declared that the activities of all Western stations broadcasting to Eastern Europe consisted of "espionage and promotion of anti-state activities." Their view was fueled by the assertive anti-communism of Radio Free Europe and its oversight by the CIA in its early years.

It also explains why the Securitate targeted Romanian ex-politicians, bankers, businessmen and their families as clandestine radio listeners during the huge wave of political imprisonments in the 1950s. The secret police commonly associated listening to clandestine radio news programs

with a “traditional” audience: highly educated people with families or contacts in Western Europe—where they would emigrate if allowed. Radio Free Europe’s audience, according to the Securitate’s early records, comprised an oppositionist elite who were waiting for the Americans to come and help restore democracy. From the start, accusations of espionage and anti-revolutionary activities were leveled against the station and its Romanian listeners, both those already arrested or those under surveillance. Telling others about the content of Western radio news programs was initially an aggravating circumstance in cases of indictment for “counter-revolutionary activities, membership of subversive organizations, and hostile propaganda.”

For almost four decades, the Securitate’s view of Radio Free Europe did not change, in spite of the radical shifts in organization and audience that occurred after 1973. The accusations of espionage persisted, even though Radio Free Europe’s broadcasts were explicitly linked to the promotion and defense of universal human rights. When President Carter made an eloquent plea for independent, unbiased and professional journalism, oddly enough, this plea was accurately registered in the Securitate’s files, along with RFE Director J.F. Brown’s declaration at the 30-year anniversary of Radio Free Europe that: “Our final goal is to facilitate the development of a new situation in the Eastern bloc, one that could enable the peoples of those countries—Romania, Bulgaria and the others—to choose the form of government that might be most convenient to them and, supported by that government, build the lifestyle they wish.”³

Even though the reports of the DIE, which had been taken over by Division 1, described the list of rules guaranteeing the high professional standards of Radio Free Europe’s editors, the Securitate maintained that all the station’s employees were engaged in espionage. This suspicion gradually grew to include their relatives or friends in Romania, and finally all RFE listeners. With no concept of human rights, the secret police considered Radio Free Europe as a foreign intruder in Romania’s internal affairs. This had serious consequences for those suspected of relationships with or who demonstrated interest in Western countries.

³ National Council for the Study of the Securitate Archives (ACNSAS), File D 21, vol. 47, 28, translated by the author from the Romanian. ACNSAS now has custody of over 80% of the Securitate records, numbering some two million pages.

The establishment of an operational group called “Ether” in June 1980 signaled the beginning of systematic nationwide surveillance of foreign radio listeners, although there are indications that the problem had been treated as a serious danger to the regime since the 1970s. In the 1950s, political prisoners had been arrested for hostile opinions or counter-revolutionary activity: now they were accused of sympathizing with Western democracies or Western media. The circle of suspects gradually expanded to include students, fans of Western music, and subscribers to the American and British Libraries: those whom the Securitate considered “intellectuals.”

Surveillance files on individuals were frequently opened under accusations of “suspicion of evasion” (i.e. illegal border crossing), “hostile opinions,” or “hostile attitude toward the social order”—all of which were deemed more serious if the person was known to listen to Radio Free Europe. Gradually, listening to and spreading information heard over Radio Free Europe became an offense in its own right. Preventing such activities was a major goal of the Securitate, especially by the end of the 1970s, after Paul Goma’s dissident movement spread.⁴ Sometimes this resulted in tragedy, for by excessively and zealously encouraging informants to come forward, the Securitate often received untrue denunciations, especially from young people trying to take revenge in personal conflicts.⁵ The consequences ranged from a reproof to exclusion from the educational system. Regular visitors to the American or British Libraries, which functioned legally in Romania, were inevitably pegged as fervent Radio Free Europe listeners. The Securitate took it for granted that readers of American books or newspapers would listen to foreign news, even if two years of systematic surveillance did not confirm this. Individual files on subscribers to the British and American Libraries provide perfect material for the study of the increasing impact of Western media on students and intellectuals.

⁴ In February 1977, Paul Goma, a Romanian dissident and writer, sent Radio Free Europe a letter entitled *To All 35 Governments that Signed the Helsinki Act*, in which he denounced the violation of human rights in Romania. After it was broadcast by Radio Free Europe, the letter was signed by hundreds of people in the first major public protest against Ceaușescu’s regime (ACNSAS, File I 2217, vol. 6, 54).

⁵ ACNSAS, File I 2617.

Another criminal offense linked to the influence of listening to and spreading information heard on Radio Free Europe was “irredentist” or anti-state activity. Irredentist activity referred to any attempt to promote the rights of the Hungarian or German minorities, including attending literary or religious meetings, and reading and distributing Hungarian publications. Files opened in the 1970s under the heading of irredentism depict listening to Western radio programs as an aggravating circumstance which would prolong the surveillance period indefinitely, increase pressure on the offenders, and strengthen the measures against them.

A tragic and eloquent example is the case of a Hungarian professor from the town of Braşov, harassed by the Securitate for attending a literary circle, sympathizing with Paul Goma’s movement, and listening regularly to Radio Free Europe. After more than a decade of pressure, starting in 1963 when he refused to become a collaborator, he committed suicide in April 1977. Surveillance did not stop even after the professor’s death. The Securitate kept microphones in the professor’s home for two more years, in search of “additional clarifications.”⁶

The increasing political turbulence associated with Radio Free Europe, especially in the wake of Paul Goma’s movement and the defection to the West of General Pacepa, the chief of Romanian espionage,⁷ led to the establishment of “Ether.” This operating group, a central unit with local branches in each district, was under the direct supervision of the vice-minister of Interior Affairs and of the state secretary, General Vlad, chief of the Securitate. The establishment of a nationwide structure with the exclusive mission of tracking and deterring Western radio broadcasts to Romania testifies to the growth of Radio Free Europe’s audience over two decades and to its increasing credibility. Many files opened in the 1970s on suspicion of hostile opinions and attitude toward the regime were based on denunciations or other evidence of listening to Radio Free Europe.

By June 1980, the station’s traditional audience of highly educated people with a political past, such as former political prisoners or their families, had expanded to include students, workers and pensioners. The

⁶ ACNSAS, File I 1659.

⁷ General Pacepa was declared a traitor in August 1978, when he refused to return to Romania after a mission to West Germany. Radio Free Europe’s broadcasts from his book *Red Horizons* helped to turn the station into Nicolae Ceauşescu’s number 1 enemy.

establishment of the “Ether” unit was not merely a preventive measure, it was also a means of repression: the secret police were preparing to act systematically and treat the offense of listening to Radio Free Europe as a political crime calling for severe punishment. As such, the “Ether” unit can be viewed as a large-scale audience survey developed, not by sociologists, but by a secret service, with the absurd premise of identifying and punishing every Romanian listener.

The “Ether” unit demonstrates the dramatic enlargement of the surveillance area, coinciding with the growing audience to and impact of clandestine news. Initially, the people followed *ex officio* were the families and friends of Radio Free Europe’s Romanian employees, the relatives of Romanian emigrants, and people who had had an emigration request denied. The Securitate’s interest in following the relatives and friends of the journalists was sufficiently high to require specific statistics. Thus the monitoring tables filled in by the “Ether” unit in 1986 include 80 employees of RFE’s Romanian service and 900 of their relatives and friends in Bucharest alone. The following year, the same 80 employees were targeted, along with 402 close relatives in the capital, while orders were given to identify and follow others in the provinces.

The group of those under *ex officio* surveillance extended to persons invited, cited, or mentioned on the radio programs, especially in connection with human rights. Radio Free Europe was acting well within its rights in presenting the views of human rights activists, but although Ceaușescu’s regime had ratified all the international conventions and treaties on human rights, and used the topic in international propaganda, the secret police persisted in considering listeners to Radio Free Europe’s programs guilty of interference in internal affairs, or even external aggression.

The 55 volumes (approximately 16,000 pages) of the “Ether” file include hundreds of transcripts of Radio Free Europe’s reports on cases of human rights violations. The Securitate turned every case of human rights violation aired on Western media into an individual surveillance operation, filed under the category of “hostile propaganda.” The victims were those who were denied a Romanian passport, who were not allowed to emigrate or visit their families abroad, intellectuals who could not publish their work for ideological reasons, members or admirers of Paul Goma’s movement, those interested in yoga or in the “Transcendental Movement,” the founders and members of the Free Union of the Ro-

manian Working Class⁸—in short, all those who asserted their basic civil rights that had been acknowledged by the communist constitution. When Amnesty International took over some cases presented by Radio Free Europe, the radio station was then viewed by the Securitate as a fief of both the CIA and Amnesty International.

It is clear from the “Ether” files how rapidly the range of *ex officio* surveillance grew: in just a few months, the Securitate shifted from identifying Radio Free Europe listeners to blocking the growth of their numbers. By the end of the 1980s, even *potential* listeners to Radio Free Europe came under government suspicion. New categories were added to the list: people who had studied abroad, authors of literary texts, even amateurs, schoolchildren and students “interested in listening to music,” soldiers (especially those formerly identified as music lovers), pensioners, those “not employed in any useful activity,” petitioners and “suppliants” to state authorities, those who spread the news and, finally, those “who make unsuitable comments.” The list ends with those “who have the intention of listening to Radio Free Europe.” Given the disastrous situation of the country at that time, this last category could include virtually the whole population, or at least all those who owned a radio able to receive Western frequencies.

To cover the whole range of suspects who made up the potential audience to Radio Free Europe, the secret police mobilized an impressive number of officers, working under strict norms and deadlines. The government demanded that the sender of a letter broadcast by a Western station should be identified within 15 days. To meet this goal, extremely severe control measures were installed at the frontiers, especially at railway border points. Customs officers were instructed to confiscate photos, letters, or other written materials that might be of journalistic interest. For many years, luggage was searched; trucks, sleeping cars, and even the stalls of Western companies represented at international fairs in Bucharest were secretly ransacked; the hotel rooms of foreign businessmen were bugged—all to prevent any contact between Radio Free Europe and the Romanian audience. Division I presented daily reports on the radio programs to identify and discourage any means of contact.

⁸ The Free Union of the Romanian Working Class was founded in 1982 by Dumitru Iuga, a TV cameraman, and was “under the influence of Radio Free Europe” (ACNSAS File F.P. 65894, Vol. 1, 13).

Identifying the channel of communication and the sender of the letter was followed by what was termed “prevention and neutralization within 60 days of any action favorable to Radio Free Europe.” This measure required the use of “complex means” offered by the Securitate’s special units, which included identifying mail boxes and pen names, tailing of suspects and their families, intercepting letters and phone calls, tapping the homes and even the detention cells of political prisoners.⁹ A political prisoner’s best chance of regaining freedom was the airing of his or her case on a foreign radio program; this is why families and their contacts abroad were so closely followed. In 1987, a huge database containing phone surveillance records—all international calls made from Romanian territory since 1977—became available. The secret police kept preventive records for over a decade in the hope of finding some radio listeners. Another preventive measure was “counter-informative processing” of those granted permission to travel, starting in June 1980 (when the “Ether” unit was founded). Any Romanian who was allowed to cross the border—a group comprising thousands of people even under the circumstances of the time—was “invited” to meet a secret police officer to make an official promise that he or she would not contact Radio Free Europe or any other Western radio station.

Where preventive measures failed, Radio Free Europe listeners could find themselves in serious trouble. The Securitate had a list of graduated repressive measures, starting with a simple warning (some “friendly advice” from an officer). Next came “positive influence” (an attempt to persuade the stubborn radio listener by enlisting the help of family or friends), followed by an “official warning,” which set off a series of drastic penalties that impacted directly on the victim’s social and professional life.

Usually, the official warning came as a result of a denunciation made by neighbors, colleagues or “friends.” At this stage, a formal interview with a Securitate officer took place, either at Securitate headquarters, or at the offender’s workplace, in the presence of his or her superiors. He or she was forced to sign a written statement undertaking to put an end to the offense. This document was kept in the personal surveillance file.

⁹ By conducting surveillance of prisoners in their cells, the Securitate could prevent the airing of the case on Radio Free Europe or its publication by Amnesty International. For details, see especially ACNSAS Files I 1563 and I 2046. Many other files record similar cases.

An official warning carried a social and professional stigma: admiration for Radio Free Europe could cost the offender a job or a promotion, or access to housing facilities, not to mention the loss of his or her passport or Party membership. Unfortunately, the most serious consequences were not documented, since their character was illegal even by communist standards.

The case of R.D., an electrician from a small town in southern Romania, is typical of the more serious consequences of listening to Radio Free Europe. Although very young, R.D. was considered a “dangerous element” and, during his official warning in the local Securitate office, was savagely beaten for “spreading jokes and political comments heard over Radio Free Europe.” As a result, this man can no longer have children, and those guilty of this barbarity have never been found, nor punished. The beating is not mentioned in the file.¹⁰

If the official warning was ineffective, the secret police resorted to “public debate,” a demoralizing and intimidating exposure in front of colleagues. Youngsters who gathered to listen to the music programs of Radio Free Europe, or pensioners who talked to others about the news heard over Radio Free Europe were the Securitate’s favorite targets and any method was employed to stop them. Radio Free Europe’s journalists and their audience shared the same fate: they were subject to libel campaigns in the press, which denounced them as delinquents, parasitic, or mentally disturbed. Special Unit D (for Disinformation), with the help of the Division for External Information, had the task of fabricating letters and derogatory articles that were published by communist newspapers in special columns. If this measure also proved ineffective, listeners ran the risk of a criminal conviction, made under false accusations and using evidence concocted by the Securitate.

A good example of this tactic is the case of a young worker from Bucharest, who in 1986 sent a letter to President Reagan via Radio Free Europe, in which he pleaded for the freedom of association. Ironically, the reason for his naive attempt to revive democracy in Romania was that he had been denied membership in the Romanian Communist Party and was looking for an alternative. The end of the story is no less absurd: he was convicted under penal law to conceal what was really political detention. The same “solution” was employed against the author of a literary manuscript, who sent his work to Radio Free Europe as part of a literary

¹⁰ See ACNSAS File I 104.

contest held in 1985. He was convicted of social parasitism, and his punishment was even more sinister: he was confined in a mental hospital.

In its last decade, the Securitate's war against Radio Free Europe and its audience was waged under the banner of "invisible violence." As Radio Free Europe's influence proved unstoppable, surveillance and deterrence by "peaceful" means were coupled with violent actions, knowledge of which comes only from the victims' testimony. Radio Free Europe's headquarters in Munich was even the target of a terrorist attack.

The exact number of people who were followed or persecuted by the Securitate because of their interest in Radio Free Europe will never be known. The catalogue of over one million personal surveillance files in the Securitate's archives gives no indication of why each file was originally opened. Even if the file explicitly mentions the subject's connection to Radio Free Europe, many other people connected to the subject but without files of their own were placed under surveillance. For this reason, an accurate calculation of the number of victims would be impossible.

From a political standpoint, Radio Free Europe had a huge impact in Romania. The small sample provides amazing examples, and proves beyond doubt that Radio Free Europe played an important role in the fall of Ceaușescu's regime in 1989. The victory was not won with glorious marches, but rather by countless anonymous acts of courage linked to Radio Free Europe in one way or another. The label "under the influence of Radio Free Europe" was attached to thousands of surveillance files opened by the secret police on people simply trying to live a normal life. All the risks, small and large, that Romanians took for more than three decades, has led to a society in which freedom may finally be allowed to flourish.

CHAPTER 12

Just Noise? Impact of Radio Free Europe in Hungary

ISTVÁN RÉV

E. H. Gombrich, one of the most influential art historians of the twentieth century, who was at one time director of the Warburg Institute in London, worked as a so-called monitor and later as a monitoring supervisor, between 1939 and 1945 at the “Listening Post” of the B.B.C. In his Creighton Lecture in 1969, he summarized his experiences, later published under the title *Myth and Reality in German War-Time Broadcasts*.¹ Gombrich claimed that, “I am not sure that German home broadcasts ever got away from the basic conception of the loudspeaker as an amplifier of the political meeting. Throughout the first year of the war its professed highlights were the carefully managed relays of Hitler’s or Goebbels’ speeches which were invariably held in front of responsive and well-drilled audiences.”

Until the early 1960s, the propaganda machinery of the Communist world tried hard to follow the German example: “People were encouraged to listen in groups, in factories and barracks, for the idea of the hearer alone in the privacy of his room and able even to switch off was anathema to this theory.”² In the first half of the 1950s in East and Central Europe, governments and local Party bosses aimed at preventing private, solitary listening, and organized instead communal, compulsory listening events at work-places, before, after, and even during working hours, in order to prevent even half-overheard critical remarks, and to provide opportunities for trained expert agitators to interpret the official voice of the regime. The public loudspeaker was a familiar object in the streets and squares, not only in small villages but even in Budapest. The well-known photographs of large crowds, gathered around public loudspeaker-

¹ London: The Athlone Press, 1970.

² Ibid., 4.

ers in 1953 in Budapest, listening to the broadcast of the historic victory of the Hungarian soccer team over England at Wembley Stadium, testifies to this wide-spread practice.

A few years later, however, Marshall McLuhan in his *Understanding Media: The Extension of Man* recognized that “Radio affects most people intimately, person-to-person, offering a world of unspoken communication between writer-speaker and the listener... That is the immediate aspect of radio. A private experience.”³ The voice coming from the air, entering the solitude of the silent room, well before the beginnings of television programs, had peculiar and dangerous effects on the listener: “It is very far from the material world, so one does not apply material standards to it. The eye alone gives a very complete picture of the world, but the ear alone gives an incomplete one. So at first it is a great temptation for the listener to ‘supplement’ the broadcast from his own imagination, to add what is so obviously lacking in the broadcast.”⁴ Radio stimulates fantasy; it feeds hope.

Measuring the impact of the private experience of listening to international broadcasts, especially before the terminal weakening of the Communist regimes, was a constant preoccupation for politicians, broadcasters and researchers. Leo Löwenthal, a former member of the Frankfurt School, Research Director of the Voice of America, first in a talk at the American Association for Public Opinion Research in 1951, then in a paper in the *Public Opinion Quarterly*, reflected on the methodological problems “posed by the vast populations who are politically inaccessible to systematic polling.”⁵ To overcome the barrier of the Iron Curtain, analysts, pollsters and researchers had to rely mostly on interviews conducted with recent immigrants, unsuspecting tourists, volunteer helpers, and undercover agents. In order “to obtain accurate information about large populations without systematic use of the populations themselves,”⁶

³ New York: Mentor, 1964, 261.

⁴ Rudolf Arnheim, “In Praise of Blindness,” reprinted in *Raditext(e)*, *Semiotext(e)* #16, ed. Neil Strauss, Volume Vi, Issue 1 (New York, 1993), 20. Originally published in 1936. Quoted by Thomas Bass, “Balloons and Broadcasts: Infiltrating the Internationalist Barrier Dividing East from West. A Study in Metaphors” (Mimeo, 1996), 15–16.

⁵ Joseph T. Klapper, Leo Löwenthal, “The Contribution of Opinion Research to the Evaluation of Psychological Warfare,” *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 15. No. 4. (Winter 1951–1952), 657.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 659.

analysts at the Office of International Broadcasting used two methods as compensatory approximations in the absence of more reliable techniques: the so-called “most like” approach, which “consists of using respondents who, while not actually members of the inaccessible group are of all available people ‘most like’ the subject group [...] to obtain information about groups behind the Iron Curtain [this was the method used in interviewing refugees]; ...and the ‘qualified judge’ approach [in the course of which] a person believed to know the group in question is asked to make certain estimates about the inaccessible group.”⁷

Probably the most ambitious use of both the “most like” and the “qualified judge” indirect approaches was the analysis of several hundred interviews conducted in 1951–52 with Polish, Czechoslovak and Hungarian refugees. The unclassified version of the study, written by Siegfried Kracauer, one of the most important twentieth century theorists of visual culture, photography and German cinema, and Paul L. Berkman, was then published by the Bureau of Applied Social Research at Columbia University.⁸

Kracauer and Berkman tried to overcome the limitations of the existing literature on “satellite mentality,” which either reflected the general situation and the system itself, or was based on subjective eye-witness reporting, with its “foreshortenings, super-impositions and omissions, on life within the system,” leaving the comprehensive characteristics of the system itself out of the picture. By focusing on the inconsistencies of the answers, on the slips of the tongue, by reading in between the lines of the interviews, the analysts attempted to outweigh the inherent biases of the interviewees. In most cases, tourists and (especially) recent emigrants, who were waiting for their residence permits, tried to please the interviewer and say what they thought was expected of them. What is mainly revealed in interviews with recent émigrés are the notions held by East Europeans from behind the Iron Curtain about the supposed image of Communism in the West. It is also apparent, both from the hundreds of interviews Kracauer and Berkman analyzed and also from the “information items” in the Open Society Archives (the remnants of a collection of thousands of interviews with East Europeans that were originally in

⁷ Ibid., 659–660.

⁸ Kracauer and Bergman, *Satellite Mentality: Political Attitudes and Propaganda Susceptibilities of Non-Communists in Hungary, Poland, and Czechoslovakia* (New York: F. A. Praeger, 1956).

the archives of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty), that the overwhelming majority of the interviewees had been, at least sporadically, listeners to RFE/RL. Their views about the West and their suppositions about the Western image of Communism had typically been formed by listening to the programs of the Radios. In turn, the programmers at the Radios made use of the interviews when broadcasting anti-Communist propaganda to the East. The stories which were told in reply to the sometimes suggestive questions of the interviewer—who had good reasons to assume the refugees had anti-Communist leanings—testified to the effectiveness of the self-fulfilling prophecies of Western broadcasts, based on the information distilled from the severely biased “information items.”⁹

Subsequent studies tried to test and make use of both the “most like” and the “informed judge” approaches, and came to the half-tested conclusion that “it can be assumed with some confidence that the opinions of recent refugees [...] are not greatly different from the opinions of the home populations if we except from the latter the Communist minority... There is little ground left for doubt that these respondents, even allowing for some bias in their statements, are essentially reliable and valuable indicators of certain areas of opinion of their parent populations.”¹⁰

Interviews conducted by opinion and audience researchers and analysts focused primarily on the private listener in his home environment (the overwhelming majority of the refugees were young single males);

⁹ “Even under the most favorable interview circumstances, it is argued, the escapees will try, consciously or not, to present the situation back home in a way which justifies their defection and conforms to what they believe Western investigators want to hear. Of course, care has been taken to trace such misrepresentation as do occur. [sic] One of the methods employed to this end [...] capitalizes on the fact that numerous escapees get entangled in contradictions without their being aware of it... And since such slips as a rule reveal what a person really thinks, one is safe in assuming that notwithstanding their allegations to the contrary, these respondents did expose themselves to the flow of domestic communications and could not help being influenced by them. It might be added that the book [*Satellite Mentality*] draws heavily on unguarded remarks, in particular those which are at variance with what the respondent under consideration volunteers within other contexts.” Ibid., 6–7.

See also Siegfried Kracauer, “The Challenge of Qualitative Analysis,” in *The Public Opinion Quarterly* Vol. 16, No. 4, Special Issue on International Communications Research (Winter 1952–1953) 631–642.

¹⁰ Richard C. Sheldon and John Dutkowski, “Are Soviet Satellite Refugee Interviews Projectable?” in *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 16, No. 4, Winter 1952–53, 593–594.

living in accommodation that was mostly rented, shared, communal—and crowded; listening secretly, mostly in the evening hours,¹¹ to the voice of the Free World, whether Voice of America, the Voice of Free Hungary, the Hungarian service of Israeli Radio, the Vatican, Monte Carlo or Radio Tirana. The researchers concentrated on the solitary listener, who was worried, with very good reason, when the voice from the radio—the only secret connection to the world beyond the Iron Curtain—loudly announced more than once every hour: “This is Radio Free Europe on the 16th, 19th, 25th, 31st, 41st, and 49th short-wave bands.” This was the moment when the listener, in horror, was almost convinced that he had been uncovered: the eavesdropping co-tenant in the shared bathroom of the communal apartment had certainly overheard the call sign of the enemy radio station from the adjacent room. Judging from the “information items” collection, quite a few interviewees complained about indiscreet and loud announcements on the Radios, which were unusually audible despite the constant noise and jamming.



Early communication theory considered noise the antithesis of message: the source of the difference between the transmitted and the received signal. However, Jacques Attali, the French novelist, presidential advisor, public intellectual, and the first CEO of the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development, building on more sophisticated concepts, came up with a different notion: “A network can be destroyed by noises that attack and transform it, if the codes of the place are unable to normalize and repress them.... Although the new order is not contained in the structure of the old, it is nonetheless not a product of chance. It is created by the substitution of new differences for the old differences. Noise is the source of these mutations to the structuring codes. For despite the death it contains, noise carries order within itself; it carries new informa-

¹¹ “The timing of the broadcasts is also important, because the twilight hours of morning and evening are the most ineffective of Soviet-originated sky-wave jamming. This is because the western broadcasts can take advantage of the ionosphere’s ‘solid’ condition at these times, while the eastern jamming broadcasts have difficulty in achieving a reasonable reflection in their ‘broken’ section of the ionosphere. This creates a time-related gap in the Soviet defenses.” K.R.M. Short, “The Real Masters of the Black Heavens,” in *Western Broadcasts over the Iron Curtain*, ed. K.R.M. Short (London: Croom Helm, 1986) 6. See also Chapter Four of this volume.

tion. This may seem strange. But noise does in fact create meaning: first, because the interruption of a message signifies the interdiction of rarity; and second, because the very absence of meaning in pure noise or in the meaningless repetition of a message, by unchanneling auditory sensations, frees the listener's imagination."¹²

Noise, as John Cage proved in his works, especially in his composition *Imaginary Landscape No.4* of 1953, which used radios as noise generators, is not simply the antithesis of meaning. To consider noise just as a natural atmospheric phenomenon would lead to dangerously oversimplified reductionism. Noise can be used as the medium of intentional message, and this is what Cage and the East European jammers managed to demonstrate.

The sound that the East European jammers generated did not simply aim to make the enemy broadcasts inaudible. The noise also established and confirmed the presence of the Communist authorities in the air, and thus in the private sphere of the secret listener. The interviewees do not avoid mentioning the jamming: they return to it, sometimes several times in the course of one single interview, as if they had tried to decipher, retrospectively, the exact meaning of the noise even to themselves. The noise generated by Soviet jamming machines did not just overwrite the message coming from the West but constantly reminded the listener of the continuous surveillance, of the fact that he was not alone even behind the closed doors of his apartment. Jamming was a negation of the possibility of privacy, aimed at establishing the omnipresence of the Communist authorities: "The absence of meaning is in this case the presence of all meanings... The presence of noise makes sense, makes meaning. It makes possible the creation of a new order on another level of organization or a new code in another network."¹³ Listening to the barely audible broadcast behind the noise, the listeners could see themselves as resistance fighters, managing to outfox the earsplitting but impotent authority.

On October 24, 1956, on the second day of the Hungarian revolution, Gusztáv Gogolyák, head of "Post Office No. 118," the covert site of the technical headquarters of the jamming operation in Budapest, ordered radio technicians all over the country to close down immediately all jamming facilities, shred the documents, and lock the doors of the jamming

¹² Jacques Attali, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), 33. Quoted by Thomas Bass, op. cit., 38.

¹³ Attali, op.cit., 33. Quoted by Thomas Bass, op.cit., 38–9.

stations. For the first time, surprised listeners were able to listen to the voices coming from Munich without the Communist authorities signaling their presence.¹⁴ The lack of intentionally generated noise in itself amounted to a clear statement: "We are here, and they have gone." In this unforeseen moment the lack of noise was the immediately decipherable message. It was an unconditional promise. The disappearance of the noise of jamming was probably one of the most reassuring radio propaganda tools. There was no need for additional promises to convince the inhabitants of the country that help was on the way: the audible voice was already in the living rooms, and it came through the open windows from the streets as well. It was difficult to imagine that Western soldiers would not soon follow.

But they did not. When the ominous noise re-entered the dilapidated apartments in the spring of 1957, after the defeat of the 1956 revolution, it announced the restoration and the consolidation of the post-revolutionary Communist regime. On May 1, 1957, barely six months after the defeat of the revolution, János Kádár waved to a marching crowd of 200,000 people from the tribune built on the site of the former Stalin monument. The noise had become once more the message: Communism was here to stay. The agreement that had been made in Yalta had to be taken seriously. It was sensible to comply.

Jamming continued until 1964,¹⁵ and was briefly resurrected after the invasion of Czechoslovakia on 21 August, 1968. When jamming was replaced by undirected atmospheric noise after 1972, listeners, because of their social conditioning, continued to attribute the poor quality of reception to the deliberate countermeasures of Communist jammers. It was hard to believe that the authorities were not responsible for all the noise coming from the ionosphere.



Western analysts were primarily interested in the effect of the broadcasts on the target audience, narrowly defined as groups of listeners and their relatives, friends, colleagues, and close acquaintances, who might be indirectly influenced through communication with the listeners. Besides these groups there was another, numerically modest, but politically very important, cluster of people, who were not able to ignore the impact of

¹⁴ Béla Révész, interview with Gusztáv Gogolyák on 26 March, 1996.

¹⁵ See Documents 34 and 35 in Part Six on the decision to end jamming.

the enemy broadcasts. The public opinion experts rarely ventured to investigate these individuals, despite the fact that they were regularly exposed to the programs of Radio Free Europe.

During World War II, MTI, the Hungarian News Agency, already used information acquired from foreign radio programs. The News Agency monitored the Hungarian, and even the Romanian, broadcasts of the BBC (which started immediately after the beginning of the war, in the fall of 1939), and the programs of Radio Moscow. After the war, monitoring activities were extended to include the Voice of America, Deutsche Welle, Radio Ankara, Vatican Radio, and the English language broadcasts of the BBC. After 1953, monitoring took place in the new headquarters building of the News Agency, but, in 1959, the monitoring department moved to Gödöllő, just outside Budapest. Reception there was ten times better than in the center of the city, where, besides constant jamming, the equipment used at MTI's Photo Agency also contributed to interference. Monitoring activities continued right up until 29 June 1995, the day when, according to the last monitoring report, "Pope John Paul II conducted mass together with the Patriarch of the Greek-Catholic Church in Rome."

The secret monitoring service, which reported to a special department of the News Agency under the control of the Ministry of the Interior, transcribed recorded programs and, from 1951 to 1989, produced summary transcripts of RFE Hungarian-language broadcasts for the so-called "Daily Confidential Information Bulletin" that was distributed to select members of the highest Party leadership. Between 1981 and 1991, alongside the programs of RFE, the Daily Confidential Bulletin included selected material from the programs of Voice of America, the BBC, Deutschlandfunk, Deutsche Welle, Radio Beijing, Radio Vatican and Israeli Radio.¹⁶ Each issue contained some 30–40 mimeographed pages, half of which were usually verbatim transcripts of RFE programs.

According to the directives, the technical personnel working at the monitoring station had to transcribe the recorded program word by word, without corrections, without adding or deleting anything from the recorded text. Until the beginning of the 1980s the transcripts were not edited; the Foreign Policy Desk, which was nominally in charge of publishing the daily bulletin, hired an editor to take charge of the transcripts only

¹⁶ Márta Szomor, "Rádiófigyelés és Kiadványai az MTI-ben" ("Radio monitoring and its publications at the MTI"), Budapest: Mimeo, July 2004.

at the beginning of the decade. The transcripts show that the transcribers had to contend with comprehension difficulties, the distorting effects of jamming and atmospheric noise, and spelling problems. Even obvious misunderstandings and misspellings had to be retained in the final text. Sometimes only a [sic!] mark indicated an obvious distortion in the edited bulletin, unaccompanied by remarks, commentaries, or interpretations. We might safely conclude that the monitoring apparatus was instructed to transmit the verbatim text of the daily broadcasts directly to the political leadership.

The technical staff was directed to pay special attention to the following programs:

1. Hungarian domestic issues, and how they were perceived abroad;
2. The activities of the opposition and the churches;
3. Interviews with, and statements by the representatives of the Hungarian emigration;
4. The life of the Hungarian minority in neighboring countries;
5. International news and commentaries relating to Hungary in the spheres of the economy, social policy, and international statistics;
6. Reflections on Hungarian press publications relating to domestic issues, the economy, the activities of the government and the parliament, statements by Hungarian political leaders;
7. Opinion of foreign experts about the most important issues of Hungarian political and economic life;
8. The role of Hungarian-born businessmen;
9. Comparative international information programs, talk shows;
10. Presentation of Hungarian firms and companies and economic actors.¹⁷

The list was extensive, and covered vast areas of contemporary political, social and economic life. Until the early 1980s, the transcribers were instructed not to include texts about the private or even the public life of Hungarian or other Communist leaders. Even in the strictly confidential internal bulletins, it was explicitly forbidden to include texts which dealt with problems of succession in Communist countries. According to the internal instructions, certain types of text had to be transcribed in full.

¹⁷ Ibid., 5.

These included manifestos and open letters by opposition groups, émigrés and civil organizations that had been sent to RFE or to the BBC.

The monitoring texts for one decade, the years from 1972 to 1981, cannot currently be found in the archives of the MTI. But even without the lost decade we have well over 50,000 (!) mimeographed pages of the Daily News Bulletin, including more than 30,000 pages of full-text transcripts of RFE programs. It is not an overstatement to say that the Communist Party leadership was far better informed about the programs of RFE than the most devoted subversive, anti-Communist private listener.

Besides the confidential mimeographed Daily News Bulletin, the special section of the Hungarian News Agency published other regular, confidential information bulletins about the programs of foreign radio stations for internal consumption: "Appendix to the Daily News Bulletin," "RFE-Western radio stations Weekly Bulletin," "Weekly Bulletin about the Hungarian language programs of Western radio stations," "Addendum to the Weekly Bulletin about the Hungarian-language programs of the Western radio stations," Military Bulletin—Hungarian language programs of Western radio stations," "Special Editions," and "Expert Editions."

Departments of the Central Committee, the Ministries, and the Information Office of the Council of Ministers had the right to order special monitoring services. The Information Office regularly ordered transcripts of Hungarian news-survey programs broadcast by Western radios, while the Ministry of the Interior acquired the full text of all programs which were based on letters or messages sent by Hungarian listeners. (In this way the Ministry tried to follow the mood swings of the population, as mirrored in correspondence with Western stations, in order to complement the heavily biased internal attitude polls, and the reports of Party functionaries and professional and so-called "informal" secret agents.) The Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Defense Committee of the Council of Ministers were all entitled to give special assignments to the monitoring section and to order specialized thematic bulletins.¹⁸

The list of members of the nomenclature who were entitled to receive the confidential bulletins was kept in a safe in the headquarters of the MTI. After 1989, it was allegedly lost. According to former employees of the News Agency, the list initially included only a few dozen func-

¹⁸ Ibid., 5–6.

tionaries, but later the mimeographed Daily News Bulletin was published internally in 150–300 copies, while the weekly editions reached a much wider audience.¹⁹ These are not insignificant numbers: it is safe to state that the wider leadership of the Hungarian Communist Party received regular, almost objective information about all RFE’s politically significant programs. The information was not intentionally distorted, was not commented upon, and the most important issues were covered extensively, with full-text versions of the transcripts.



On March, 24, 1969, the Politburo of the Hungarian Communist Party decided to set up a “Foreign Propaganda Sub-Department” inside the Agitation and Propaganda Department of the Central Committee. The Sub-Department was instructed to monitor and regularly evaluate the “enemy propaganda directed against our People’s Democracy” and to set up an “evaluating committee” with representatives of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defense and the Interior, as well as delegates from the Institute of Cultural Relations (an important intelligence cover organization), the Hungarian News Agency and the Hungarian Radio. The committee had to prepare quarterly reports about the recent tendencies of “enemy propaganda.” The first report covered the third quarter of 1969. The reports were sent to the members of the Politburo and the Secretariat, the Department Heads of the Central Committee and a few other high-ranking officials whose work was specifically related to international or domestic propaganda and counter-propaganda. According to a memorandum sent by the then head of the Agitation and Propaganda Department to János Kádár, First Secretary of the Party, the work of the evaluation committee was not exceptional in the socialist countries, and the Party leaderships of the GDR, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and the Soviet Union had suggested to the Hungarian Central Committee that they share experiences and exchange the evaluation reports. (In a spirit of mutual distrust, the Secretariat decided in the end to share the information only with the specialized agencies of the Soviet Union.)²⁰

¹⁹ Personal communication of Mátyás Vince, President of MTI.

²⁰ Sándor Jakab, head of the Agitation and Propaganda Department of the Central Committee of the HSWP, memo to Comrade János Kádár, December 8, 1969.

Following the decision of the Politburo, from the third quarter of 1969 onwards, the evaluation committee started producing and distributing its own reports, thus supplementing the copious information already available about enemy radio programs. The evaluation reports quote extensively from the publications of the Western press, from the programs of the “enemy radio stations,” and refer verbatim to the propaganda materials of Western organizations. They employ only the minimal necessary markers to distance the stand of the evaluators from the views of the Western media; they use quotation marks when referring to the “evaluation” and the “analysis” of the Western “experts” and “specialists.” When quoting from the Western media, the evaluators preface quotations with expressions such as: “falsifying the actual situation, Western analysts state...,” or “misinterpreting recent developments, they claim...,” or “allegedly focusing on...,” or “creating the illusion...” The Communist counter-propagandists refer to “the center of imperialist propaganda machinery,” to “those who are interested in the loosening of control over the society,” to those who use “objectivity” (in quotation marks), who are careful to convey the “appearance of objectivity,” who talk or write “objectively.” In the vocabulary of counter-propaganda, the adjective “objective” slowly became one of the most important negative characteristics of the Western media, a sort of Wagnerian *leitmotiv*.

There were important differences regarding the transcripts of the programs. The transcripts were verbatim texts of broadcasts; the technical personnel had nothing to do with the content, and did not become involved in any way. The evaluation reports, however, were no longer impersonal: the members of the committee were known; the head or the deputy of the Agitation and Propaganda Department signed the report. (After 1973, the hard-liner Károly Grósz, Deputy Head of the Department, who would later become the last Secretary General of the Hungarian Party, put his signature on the documents submitted.) Judged on the basis of both style and content, the reports were closer to those who wrote and read them than the program transcripts. The tone of the reports was not very far from the voice of an attentive, cautious, somewhat uneasy observer. It would not be wrong to claim that the evaluators, and, to some extent, the readers of the reports, internalized, in a perverted form, the perspective and content of the narrative.

The evaluators no longer claimed that the other side aimed at overthrowing the Communist regime. They usually used the expression “their aim was to loosen up the control of the regime over society.” Reading the

reports, it becomes obvious that, by the end of the 1960s, the Communist experts had become convinced that the Western propagandists were not in the business of inciting a rebellion. This was a period of uncomfortable, involuntary—if not peaceful, at least inevitable—coexistence between the two sides in the Cold War.

The end of the 1960s differed significantly from the previous decade, especially the pre-1956 period, when, according to the “information items” and to the Kracauer-Berkman book, the most popular RFE program was the so-called “Black Book,” which exposed by name especially cruel Communist functionaries and petty officials at specific institutions, factories, firms and localities, thus creating the impression that the Radios were actually there, close at hand, inside the workplace, ready to uncover those who were responsible for the daily suffering of the community. (Besides the “Black Book,” according to interviews, another highly popular program was the regular broadcast of gypsy music—inauthentic, urbanized fake folk music—the favorite of the *déclassé* middle class.) The “Black Book” program was premised on the quick collapse of the regime, after which those who had been singled out as responsible for repression would be duly punished. Before 1956, the time span was limited: the period was considered to be one of transition. Former aristocrats turned cab drivers were still addressed by the concierges of their nationalized apartment building as though they had managed to keep their former titles and social status.

Paradoxically, the defeat of the 1956 revolution (when the discrepancy between the liberation rhetoric of the American administration and cruel reality became evident), contributed to the stability of the divided world. The launch of the Sputnik signaled the end of the period of transition and the arrival of involuntary *détente*. Both sides gave up their hopes of imminent victory, and tried to readjust to long-term coexistence.

The reports of the evaluation committee are characteristic of this period. It would be instructive to conduct a detailed philological analysis comparing the language, vocabulary, and persistence of certain formulas in the course of the East–West dialogue on the air. Communism, or its representation, was a joint construct: the result of a not-so-obvious but permanent dialogue between strategists on the two sides. RFE monitored, recorded, and transcribed the broadcasts of the official East and Central European radio stations. The summary transcripts, which are strikingly similar to the mimeographed Hungarian Daily News Bulletins (and are now stored in the Open Society Archives in Budapest), were sent as tele-

grams to Washington with English summaries. In the morning, when officials arrived at their offices in the State Department and other specialized agencies, they found the daily transcripts on their desks. Directives were sent to the Political Analysis Department and to the broadcasting services of the Radios with instructions about how to respond to the Communist propaganda. And, as we have seen, in Budapest, in Gödöllő, and in all the East European capitals, monitors and technical staff were busy listening, jamming, recording and transcribing the enemy radio broadcasts and sending daily bulletins to the select group of addressees at the Agitation and Propaganda Department of the Central Committee, the Ministry of the Interior, and other covert or not-so-covert agencies, which had the right to instruct the national radios about how to counter the “enemy propaganda.” The evaluation team regularly analyzed the tone and content of RFE programs and submitted suggestions to the Secretariat and the Politburo on how to instruct the media, especially the national radio service, in the foreseeable future. What the unsuspecting listener heard in the solitude of his small room while listening openly to national radio or secretly to RFE programs was all part of the same conversation going on above his head between programmers, political strategists, and public opinion experts on the two sides.

Instead of a deep philological analysis, I will present a seemingly insignificant, almost randomly selected, example from the history of this joint effort, using the first, hitherto unanalyzed, evaluation reports.

The so-called “New Economic Mechanism” was introduced in Hungary at the beginning of 1968. The reform package was aimed at “stimulating” the market and featured limited market incentives, a limited role for supply and demand, very limited autonomy at the micro-levels of the economy, limited self-constraint of the central planning organs, and a limited role for private initiative, especially in agriculture. Work on it began in the middle of the 1960s, at the time when some of the other socialist countries, among them the GDR, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and even the Soviet Union, were embarking on the introduction of limited reforms, in the sphere of the economy only. By the time the Hungarian reform, by far the most ambitious economic reform package in Eastern Europe, was introduced, the international situation had worsened considerably, the atmosphere had become unfavorable to reform, and, after the invasion of Czechoslovakia, it became evident that Moscow would come out against the continuation of dubious economic experiments with uncertain outcomes. The Hungarian leadership severely restricted the range of the re-

form, without admitting, however, that it had had to give up the planned changes, which had been publicly marketed as important contributions to the standard of living and the development of socialist economic theory and practice. The early reports of the evaluation committee dealt extensively with Western reactions to this situation, especially those of RFE.

The first report, which covers the third quarter of 1969, stated that “the New Economic Mechanism is the focus of the imperialist propaganda. The Western propaganda agencies present themselves as true and ‘consistent defenders of reform’ in opposition to the Party and the socialist state, which do not have the courage needed to carry through the reform... According to Western radio commentators, ‘responsibility for the inconsequential implementation of the basically progressive reform rests with the leadership of the Party, which willingly or unwillingly subordinates Hungarian national interests to the orders of Moscow, and by serving the interests of the Soviet conservatives—independent of the true intentions of the Hungarian leadership—endangers the success of the reform.’”²¹...On the first anniversary of the coordinated action of the five countries in Czechoslovakia [they do not have the courage even in a strictly confidential document to name the obvious] Western propaganda emphasizes the fact that, although not voluntarily, but under Soviet pressure, Hungary played an indecent role in the aggression against the independence and sovereignty of the Czechoslovak people.”²²

The report from the fourth quarter of 1969 observed that Western radios were emphasizing “the growing tension between the ‘more flexible’ Hungarian economic mechanism and the ‘bureaucratic, inflexible centralism’ of the COMECON... Moscow tries hard to make Hungary more and more dependent on her... Hungary is prevented from making use of the opportunities created by available Western loans [...] it is due to the dictates of Moscow that the Hungarian party has to subordinate genuine national interests to the needs of ‘internationalism.’”²³

The report went on: “The propagandists of the imperialists, among them RFE, try to prove the intimate and inevitable connection between the probable outcome of the fight between ‘neo-Stalinist anti-reformers

²¹ MOL (Hungarian National Archives) MDP/MSZMP dept. 288 5/505 ö. e., 1–2. (References refer to the old fond and serial numbers, before the Party documents were consolidated with the general holdings of the Hungarian National Archives.)

²² Ibid., 4.

²³ MOL. 288. 11/2873. ö. e. 3–4.

and genuine reformers in the Soviet Union' and the fate of the Hungarian reform. The Western observers argue that the outcome of the reform efforts is primarily due to international, and not so much to domestic factors."²⁴ It continued: "'Analyzing' the internal situation of our country, it is remarkable that RFE misconstrues the relationship between the Party and the people. It claims that there is an implicit deal between the Hungarian leadership and the people. The government lets the people live, as much as possible, quietly, as they wish. The people, on the other hand, let the Communists govern quietly. Both parties know what the other might be able to do in a serious situation. The Western propaganda presents 'the policy of small steps at a time' as a Hungarian specialty, and claims that what the Hungarian Party leadership is trying to accomplish in a covert way is basically the same as what Czechoslovakia tried to do in 1968."²⁵

According to the dubious view of the evaluation experts, there was allegedly a remarkable difference between the way the Hungarian reforms were presented to the Western public on the one hand, and to the Hungarian audience on the other: "Whereas the reports targeted at the Western public emphasized—'in a tendentious way'—the remarkable results of the reforms, the 'daring' and 'bold' efforts, 'the outstanding social, political and economic achievements,' the programs aimed at the Hungarian audience (especially the programs of Radio Free Europe) chastise the inconsistencies of the reform policy, urge the speeding up of the reforms, and list all the unfulfilled promises."²⁶ The counter-propagandists' narratives described the alleged opposition between the "suspicious arch-conservatism" of the Soviets and the "liberalism of the Hungarian leadership," the fact that Western media was trying to make the precarious Hungarian situation even more difficult to manage.

The second quarterly report in 1970 drew attention to some new developments in Western propaganda. Western media "present Hungary as the possible model for the other socialist countries; the propagandists highlight the emerging capitalist elements in our economy [...] they consider the economic reform as a new opening to the West [...] they talk about 'the so-called Hungarian model'..."²⁷ "The Western radio broad-

²⁴ MOL. 288. 11/2941. ö. e. 2.

²⁵ Ibid., 3.

²⁶ Ibid., 3.

²⁷ MOL. 288. 11/2994. ö. e. 1–2.

casts hold the Soviet Union responsible for the problems of the Hungarian economy.”²⁸

“A new voice is emerging in the West,” claimed one of the reports dated October 26, 1970. “If the West showed too much enthusiasm for the ‘*silent revolution of Hungary*’ this might lead to a clash with the Soviet Union. The Western analysts call for self-restraint when commenting on the Hungarian reforms, for too much ‘wind’—as *Die Presse* puts it—has always turned East European spring-awakenings into icy Siberian winters.”²⁹

As these short, randomly selected excerpts prove, this is highly unusual material. My question at this point is not whether we are able to recognize the voice of RFE behind these descriptions, nor whether the texts are faithful representations of the RFE programs (most probably not quite), but what the function and the impact of these curious interpretations of alleged Western media reports was on Hungary.

Most probably there were obvious discrepancies between the verbatim transcripts of the Daily News Bulletin and the tendentious quotes of the evaluation reports. However, it was not in the interests of the carefully selected group of Party leaders to point out the incongruities. They had got what they had been hoping for. The distorted and misinterpreted texts of Western propaganda provided a strange legitimacy, and supplied important additional arguments, for their unprincipled compromises and faint-hearted retreat. I want to make a strong claim: in my view, it was with the help of the interpretations supplied by the evaluation experts that the Hungarian party leadership discovered the essence of the economic reforms and sold the compromised half-measures as genuine changes both to the population and to themselves. The evaluators, with the implicit consent of the leadership, provided the alleged approval of the Western media that helped the Party leaders to deceive themselves. Their officially sanctioned self-deception made it possible for them to deceive, in turn, the population.

It is easy to imagine the socialist economy in the terms that the French philosopher Michel Foucault used to describe the modern prison system. Prison, according to Foucault, is not a passive institution shaken periodically by various movements for reform, but is the natural sphere of constant intervention. Prison reform is contemporary with the prison

²⁸ Ibid., 5.

²⁹ MOL. 288. 11/2994 ö. e. 4. Emphasis supplied.

institution; constant reform is a constituent element of the institution. The necessity for reform is not simply the result of criticism of the system: to some extent the constant change adapts the prison to its purposes. The task of the institution is to correct, and the prison system can achieve this only if it undertakes constant self-correction (the direction of which is also constantly changing).³⁰ The New Economic Mechanism introduced in 1968 is the classic example of the exercise of power with the help of ambiguity. The system, which its critics described as neither plan nor market, and referred to as the negative essence of the reform, was regarded by the political leadership as a positive characteristic. It was both what it had been and what it had become, something that contained its own built-in contradiction, and which, as a result, could no longer be openly defined. Those who demanded a market were given a piece of one, those who feared that capitalism was creeping back in could be reassured, those who wanted things to remain as they were need not be disappointed, those who were anxious for change found something to feed their hopes. The perpetually changing regulations made it clear that there was nothing that could not be revoked or reversed. A decision did not imply that other possibilities were definitively excluded.

The possibility of perpetual alterations encouraged the perpetual hope of change. Even after the reforms had run aground in the first half of 1968, immediately after the introduction of the first reform measures, it was still possible to keep hoping that alterations would, one day, mean change. The alterations institutionalized ambiguity, uncertainty, and the impossibility of foreknowledge. Nothing was what it purported to be. Everything had become a sign of something else, from which quite different conclusions could easily be drawn. The initiated claimed to discern battles between modernizers and conservatives, independents and adherents of the Soviet neo-Stalinists, between the forces of good and evil, progressives and regressives, whatever these categories meant.

In the meantime reform had become completely disembodied, its condition reduced to a ghostly state in which its own antithesis had become an element of its existence. The leadership was in need of support from the West, and help came from interpreters and evaluators of Western propaganda. They needed to show themselves as martyrs to progression, attempting the impossible in the face of the constant pressure com-

³⁰ See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (New York: Vintage, 1979), 234–235.

ing from the inflexible East. They pretended that without the limits set by Moscow, both Hungary and socialism would move further and more quickly in the direction of the envisioned end of history. By making good use of consciously misperceived Western reactions, they not only presented themselves as martyrs but also began to see themselves in this light. As in the Japanese film *Onibaba*, the mask they created for themselves between the lines of Western propaganda rotted into their faces, and it became impossible to distinguish between their old selves and their pretend new selves. Once ambiguity had pervaded every sphere of being, no-one knew who was doing the manipulating and who was being manipulated. They could not even remember what it was all in aid of.

After the changes of 1989, the former Communists did not forget their reading of Western media. They recalled the alleged praise of Western enemy media, and remembered their alleged heroic efforts, as they had read about them, back at the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s, in the Western press through the distorting optics of the evaluation committee's reports. After the *Soviet* defeat of the 1956 revolution (and nowadays this is the way history is recalled: it was the Soviets, and the Soviets alone who defeated the 1956 revolution) they tried hard to comply with the demands of the revolution "in the Hungarian way," deceiving the Soviets, one small step at a time, despite the dangers and the Soviet pressures. They did exactly what Dubček tried to do in Czechoslovakia, but in a smarter way. With the help of their "silent revolution," they managed to transform their system into a Western-type market-based modern democracy. The transition of 1989 was the final victory of their long, smart, silent work. The insiders, the Party reformers, led the country out of Communism, to the rule of law, parliamentary democracy, and an economy coordinated by the invisible hand of the market. The New Economic Mechanism—in an invisible way—aimed at achieving exactly this.

At a hearing in the European Parliament, László Kovács, Foreign Minister of post-communist Hungary, and a candidate for the post of Commissioner of the European Union, was asked about the role he played in post-1956 Hungary. The former deputy head of the Foreign Policy Department of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Communist Party answered without hesitation. According to his recollection, what he had done was merely to work on Hungary's return to the European community. The road to NATO led via the Warsaw Pact, to the European Union via the COMECON, and to the post of the Commissioner via amnesia and self-deception.

CHAPTER 13

Bulgarian Regime Countermeasures against Radio Free Europe

JORDAN BAEV

The impact of RFE's Bulgarian broadcasts falls historically into three distinct phases, and so, by extension, do the countermeasures taken against the station. During the first period (1950s–1960s), the broadcasts proved relatively ineffective in influencing the Bulgarian public. RFE's Bulgarian service was established by “old” émigrés who had left Bulgaria immediately after Communist rule was established, and were little known inside the country. These émigrés had very limited information about the circumstances of Bulgarian political and cultural life. Usually the broadcasts demonstrated unimpressive and one-sided propaganda methods and rhetoric. During this period, the most effective Western broadcasts were those of the BBC World Service, followed by Voice of America and Radio France International. The Bulgarian government typically tried to jam all “anti-Bulgarian” programs (including those of Radio Beijing and Radio Tirana from the mid-1960s).

The second stage (mid-1970s to mid-1980s) coincided with the Brezhnev period of “stagnation,” during which an increasing number of people in the Communist bloc lost faith in the system's peaceful and natural evolution toward “socialism with a human face.” A new generation of younger, well-educated intellectuals (such as Georgi Markov, Asen Ignatov, Dimiter Inkyov, Atanas Slavov and Vladimir Kostov) escaped to the West and began working for RFE's Bulgarian section. They provided detailed knowledge of the Communist elite's day-to-day life and secrets, and their names and work were widely recognized by the Bulgarian public.

The third period, triggered to some extent by Soviet *perestroika*, saw the impact of RFE's broadcasts on events in Bulgaria rise significantly. In the late 1980s, an increasing number of informal, dissident groups were created within Bulgaria, mainly within intellectual circles.

For the first time, RFE broadcasters established direct contact with many respected figures who used the broadcasts to appeal to the public (for instance, RFE editor Rumiana Uzunova's now-famous live phone interviews).

Bulgarian Communist regime documents now available in the Interior Ministry,¹ Foreign Office, and State archives indicate that RFE's activities were a major target of monitoring and infiltration by the Bulgarian secret service ever since the establishment of the Free Europe Committee.

The Bulgarian State Security Service was established in 1947 as a Directorate, and transformed in 1952 into a State Security Committee (KDS). The activities of certain State intelligence directorates (which went through several iterations from the 1950s through the late 1980s) were dedicated solely to struggling against "imperialist ideological subversive propaganda" and fighting against the "hostile anti-Communist emigration" to the West. As early as 1947, a special "Radio Intelligence and Radio Counterintelligence" unit was formed within the State Security Directorate. Its principal task was to "locate and monitor the traffic of foreign official and clandestine broadcasts." In 1948, the unit started an operation codenamed "Rositsa," and in the early 1950s it regularly delivered summaries of information regarding the main directions of "imperialist radio propaganda against Bulgaria" to the Communist leadership.² A Politburo secret resolution of July 1954 transformed this unit into the State Security Committee's Fourth Directorate.

Active measures against the "hostile political emigration" in Western Europe and the personnel of RFE's Bulgarian section were assigned initially to the State Security's First Directorate (the foreign intelligence service), which in 1970 became the First Main Directorate (PGU). Responsibility for active measures within the structure of the PGU rested with two *line* intelligence departments and one *functional* department, the Counterintelligence Department. The first intelligence information

¹ Since 2007, according to a new law establishing a State Commission responsible for disclosing the dossiers of former state security and military intelligence personnel and collaborators, all state security documents for the period 1944–1990 are to be transferred from the Ministry of the Interior archive and placed at the disposal of the commission.

² Archive of the Ministry of the Interior (AMVR), Sofia, Fond 4, Record 1, File 110.

on RFE activity was distributed inside the Ministry of the Interior in March 1951.³

Since the late 1950s, an important role in the fight against the “hostile emigration” had been assigned also to the Bulgarian counterintelligence service, the Second Main Directorate (VGU), in particular its Fourth Department (transformed into the Twelfth Department in 1971). In 1967, a new Sixth Directorate (Internal Counterintelligence) was established to fight against “ideological imperialist subversions;” this could be defined as a new branch of the Political Police. A special unit devoted to “fighting centers of ideological subversion on capitalist territory” was created at the Sixth Directorate in 1968, and reorganized in a new Fifth Department in 1970. In the late 1970s, the Bulgarian Party Politburo approved the Interior Minister’s proposal to establish a special operational group, comprised of senior representatives of the First, Second, and Sixth State Security Directorates with the goal of “organizing and coordinating all operational work on the Bulgarian emigration” in the West.⁴

Special units within other state institutions were also created to fight “imperialist ideological subversion.” RFE broadcasts were monitored and recorded by special units inside the Ministry of Transportation and Communications, and the Bulgarian Telegraph Agency (BTA).⁵ In April 1961, a new counter-propaganda section was established at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁶ Special State Security units in the 1970s infiltrated agencies of the Bulgarian National Radio and TV. Between the late 1970s and the early 1980s, new inter-agency coordinating bodies were established. The Council for Ideological Work and the Coordination Board for Propaganda Abroad frequently discussed RFE broadcasting, as well.

During this period, exchanges of intelligence information and planning of joint operations against RFE among the Warsaw Pact secret services increased. Documents from the KGB and other Eastern European security services in the Bulgarian archives attest to secret measures aimed at RFE. At the first multilateral meeting of East European “radio counter-intelligence” services in Prague in September 1955, a proposal for establishing a joint “Coordination Group” was accepted.⁷

³ AMVR, Fond 2, Record 1, File 1115.

⁴ Central State Archive (CDA), Sofia, Fond 1-B, Record 64, File 504.

⁵ Unfortunately the archives have not yet been processed and are not yet accessible to researchers.

⁶ Diplomatic Archive (DA), Sofia, Record 17-P, File 1226.

⁷ AMVR, Fond 4, Record 3, File 11, 1–9.

From the early years of the Communist regime, the organization of jamming of Western broadcasts to Eastern Europe was one of the main tasks of State Security. In 1953, when the Soviet Chief Security Adviser to the Bulgarian Ministry of the Interior proposed some measures for “improving” the work of the State Security Committee, one of his main recommendations for the Bulgarian “comrades” was to “organize more effective jamming of the hostile broadcasts.”⁸ The regime temporarily stopped jamming the broadcasts of other Western stations on several occasions, but never of RFE. In May 1964, the Bulgarian Politburo ordered an end to jamming of BBC World Service programs in Bulgaria,⁹ although this was short-lived. Similarly, jamming of VOA Bulgarian-language programs was lifted in September 1974, after the visits of high-level US officials to Sofia and Bulgarian officials to Washington.¹⁰ Although the US ambassador to Sofia, Raymond Garthoff, in a note delivered to Bulgarian Foreign Minister Petar Mladenov in December 1979, spoke of renewed jamming of VOA Bulgarian programming since the previous month, correspondence between the Foreign Affairs and Interior Ministries clearly show that even Mladenov, a Politburo member who had been Foreign Affairs minister for a decade, was unaware of jamming.¹¹ In the following years, correspondents and high-ranking officials from VOA, BBC, Deutsche Welle and other Western broadcasters were allowed into Bulgaria for the first time. Finally, in March 1989, just six months before Zhivkov’s ouster, the Politburo adopted a resolution to discontinue jamming of all foreign broadcasts (with the sole exception of Radio Ankara, because of serious tension in Turkish–Bulgarian relations at the time).¹²

Bulgarian State Security officials paid more attention to RFE and its personnel immediately after the Hungarian uprising of October 1956. A Bulgarian counter-intelligence estimate from November 1956 underlined RFE’s “important role” in the “preparation and pursuance of counter-revolutionary events in Hungary.” The document said RFE had transmitting stations in Portugal and West Germany, and that its staff comprised about

⁸ Ibid., Fond 5, Record 1, File 23, 202.

⁹ CDA, Fond 1-B, Record 6, File 5454, 1.

¹⁰ In reality, the 1974 Bulgarian government decision was the corollary of a Soviet decision to stop jamming VOA, BBC, and DW transmissions in the Russian language. See AMVR, Fond 1, Record 10, File 2083, 105.

¹¹ DA, Record 29-P, File 24, 1–4.

¹² CDA, Fond 1-B, Record 64, File 909, 1.

1,300 people.¹³ A secret communiqué, dated March 8, 1957, said RFE and VOA Bulgarian service heads had held a coordination meeting in October 1956 in Munich.¹⁴ Information from October 1957 outlined coordination methods used by RFE, citing instructions from an RFE circular.¹⁵ A State Security information summary of November 1959 discussed “the impact of the hostile broadcasting amongst the reactionary elements inside the country.”¹⁶

A great many intelligence summaries were sent regularly to Moscow. In January 1959, the KGB leadership asked their Bulgarian counterparts to collect information on US radio propaganda against Bulgaria; the information was to be used to prepare Khrushchev’s meeting with his Western counterparts in Geneva.¹⁷ In a subsequent report to the KGB, the chief of the Bulgarian State Security Second Directorate reported that one of his agents (alias “Elena”) had established contact with a “few” Bulgarian RFE collaborators in West Germany.¹⁸ Another detailed report from April 1959 listed the names of collaborators of the RFE and VOA Bulgarian sections in Munich, and their branch representatives in Italy, France, Austria, Greece and Turkey.¹⁹

Concurrently, the KGB sent information on RFE’s structure and activities to Sofia. From the late 1970s to the early 1980s, the KGB and the KDS carried out joint operations against RFE. In 1976, as a consequence of this cooperation, the two secret services initiated operation “NORD,” in which a Bulgarian agent in West Germany (alias “Ivan”) shadowed two RFE collaborators.²⁰ KGB Fifth Directorate chief General Fillip Bobkov and KDS Sixth Directorate chief General Petar Stoyanov discussed a Soviet initiative to organize an international tribunal against the Free Europe Committee in August 1978 in Moscow.²¹ During the following year, the two security agencies worked to uncover key RFE Bulgarian

¹³ AMVR, Fond 2, Record 1, File 790, 1–3.

¹⁴ Ibid., File 799, 2–3.

¹⁵ Ibid., 4–5.

¹⁶ Ibid., Fond 13, Record 1, File 1666.

¹⁷ Ibid., Fond 2, Record 1, File 1359, 77, 78.

¹⁸ Ibid., 290.

¹⁹ Ibid., File 1498a, 58–60.

²⁰ Ibid., Fond 1, Record 10, File 1214, 7.

²¹ Ibid., Record 12, File 110, 39, 41. See Document 23 in Part Six. Such issues were discussed for the first time two years earlier at a meeting of Eastern European intelligence services in Prague on 12–13 February 1976. See Documents 21 and 22, Part Six.

section collaborators and their network of anti-Communists in Bulgaria. According to a report, as part of this effort, the agencies attempted to infiltrate RFE's personnel with a Bulgarian secret agent.²²

Operations of this kind continued under Gorbachev. Thus, a high-ranking Bulgarian official visiting Moscow in December 1985 discussed with KGB Chairman Viktor Chebrikov a new plan to coordinate efforts to discredit RFE.²³

Similar exchanges were conducted with the Eastern European state security services. It is likely that, during a regular Warsaw Pact Intelligence/Counterintelligence meeting in late 1970, a special multilateral agreement on information-sharing was agreed upon. This is suggested by the intensified exchange of information on RFE the following year. Thus, in March, May and June 1971, András Benkei, the Hungarian Interior Minister, sent to his Bulgarian counterpart three summaries on "The Situation in Radio Free Europe."²⁴ A MfS (Ministerium für Staatssicherheit) report on RFE was sent from East Berlin to Sofia in March 1971.²⁵ And in August of the same year the Bulgarian State Security Committee delivered to the Romanian State Security Council new information on this issue.²⁶

Coordination measures against RFE were also discussed at multilateral meetings of the State Security services' Ideological Directorates. At the third multilateral meeting in Moscow in April 1980,²⁷ for instance, Hungarian representative General Karas briefed the gathering on RFE's new efforts to foment internal opposition in Eastern Europe based on the protection of "human rights." According to General Karas, the Hungarian secret service had intercepted fresh information on RFE's new tactics and methods. The Polish representative, General Staruha, and his Czechoslovak counterpart, Colonel Kovacz, also spoke about the "RFE issue" in their reports to the meeting.²⁸

Bilateral agreements between Eastern European intelligence services usually included some points on the fight against RFE's "subversive

²² Ibid., Record 10-A, File 344, 176. Document 24, Part Six.

²³ Ibid., Fond 2, Record 4, File 114, 29. Document 27, Part Six.

²⁴ Ibid., Fond 1, Record 10, File 1666, 159–161, 181–185, 224.

²⁵ Ibid., File 1657.

²⁶ Ibid., File 837.

²⁷ The first meeting was held in Havana in 1974, and the second one in Budapest in 1977.

²⁸ AMVR, Fond 22, Record 1, File 124. See Document 25, Part Six.

propaganda.” For instance, the agreement between the Bulgarian and Czechoslovak Interior Ministries for 1979–81 made special note of efforts to infiltrate RFE.²⁹ In March 1983, following a bilateral agreement between Bulgaria and Poland on intelligence cooperation, Bulgarian Interior Minister General Dimitar Stoyanov sent two intelligence reports to his Polish counterpart, General Czesław Kiszczak, on Radio Free Europe and on the Solidarity group in Paris.³⁰

Reviewing Bulgarian Communist Party and security services documents on the so-called “imperialist ideological anticommunist propaganda,” it seems clear that countermeasures against RFE intensified in the mid-70s. The three factors that might account for this spike in activity are, first, the Carter Administration’s active “human rights” policy in Eastern Europe, of which Zbigniew Brzezinski was a leading exponent; second, attempts to establish in Bulgaria dissident groups on the lines of Charter 77 and other Soviet and Central European dissident movements; and third, noticeable changes to RFE’s transmissions to Bulgaria. The first factor still provokes scholarly dispute concerning the effectiveness of the “soft” approach favored by the Carter administration compared to the more aggressive stance later taken by the Reagan administration. The second factor seems more hypothetical, since there were no serious acts of dissent in Bulgaria during the period in question, although the example of the Central European countries provoked Bulgarian security services to take “preventive” measures.

The third factor—changes in RFE programming—was initiated by the commentaries of such prominent personalities as Petar Semerdjiev, Georgi Markov and Vladimir Kostov. All three were well acquainted with the Communist elite’s secret life and internal conflicts and intrigues. Semerdjiev, a Central Committee member in the late 1940s, had been accused of being an “enemy” during the Communist Party’s first wave of purges in 1949. Georgi Markov had been a promising writer in the 1960s, and had been invited by Todor Zhivkov himself to join his personal “hunting” group, which consisted of high-ranking Party and State functionaries, and prominent intellectuals. Markov also collaborated with a literary group at the Interior Ministry that was supervised by a “writer” who was also a founder of the KDS Sixth Directorate (Political Police), Colonel Kostadin Kyulyumov. Consequently, Markov had access to top-

²⁹ Ibid., Fond 1, Record 12, File 224, 4. See Document 24 in Part Six.

³⁰ Ibid., Record 10-a, File 1122, 19.

secret files to aid his work on revolutionary novels and screenplays aimed at bolstering a “heroic” official vision of the State Security forces. In 1969, after the censors rejected some of his plays, Markov went to Italy. In 1970, his visa was extended by a year as a special concession by the Bulgarian Foreign Minister Ivan Bashev, but in November 1971, when he was in London, the Bulgarian authorities refused him a new visa extension, and he stayed on in that city.³¹ As for Vladimir Kostov, a talented political commentator, who publicly declared himself a dissident after a mission as a BTA correspondent in Paris in 1977, he had actually worked as a foreign intelligence officer under journalistic cover.

KDS intelligence and security reports from the mid-70s described RFE as being one of the principal channels for and a “herald” of anti-Communist and anti-Soviet propaganda in Bulgaria. Petar Semerdjiev’s “anti-Communist” commentaries were noted as being especially effective.³² Another security report from May 1976 discussed changes to RFE’s Bulgarian section, concluding: “RFE acts as an independent propaganda unit [...] whose principal goal continues to be to bring discredit to the Bulgarian Communist Party’s leading role in our society.” RFE targeted its transmissions at the younger generation and the intelligentsia. Security analyses from that period noted the broadcaster’s “more flexible approach” to events in the country. Moving away from direct challenges, RFE had adopted a more “balanced” approach to news coverage, competing with official Bulgarian media, and attempting to exemplify radio journalism.³³

A special report by the chief of the Sixth Directorate’s Seventh Department from July 1976 focused on Georgi Markov, who was described as “heavy artillery” in the radio propaganda fight. Markov’s commentaries were described as strongly anti-Communist, but presented in an “acceptable and effective format.” Many of his famous *Reportages in Absentia on Bulgaria* were quoted in detail in security reports.³⁴ Another report from the Seventh Department in November 1976 said *Reportages in Absentia* was RFE’s strongest propaganda tool against the Communist regime in Bulgaria that year.³⁵

³¹ Georgi Markov was sentenced in absentia in 1972 to six years’ imprisonment as a “traitor to the Motherland.”

³² AMVR, Fond 22, Record 1, File 37, 3–5.

³³ Ibid., File 51, 19, 25.

³⁴ Ibid., 26–31.

³⁵ Ibid., 55.

In a very detailed report of April 1977 on “the enemy’s subversive propaganda activity,” Sixth Directorate chief General Petar Stoyanov informed the state and Party leadership that “[t]he most malignant of the RFE Bulgarian collaborators are the intellectuals and traitors to the Motherland, [such as] Georgi Markov with his *Reportages in Absentia*, Petar Semerdjiev, with his remarks on the life of Georgi Dimitrov, and Dimiter Inkyov, with his feuilletons.”³⁶ Information summaries by the Sixth Directorate chief from May 1978 again called RFE the “most dangerous and active enemy propaganda center against the People’s Republic of Bulgaria.” The communiqué again paid special attention to those whom they considered the worst offenders: Georgi Markov, Petar Semerdjiev and Vladimir Kostov.³⁷

One very detailed report on RFE in December 1976 came from the deputy chief of the First Main Directorate (foreign intelligence), General Vladimir Todorov. The report was based on the Annual Report of the US Board for International Broadcasting to the US President. In the report, the newly combined station RFE/RL was characterized as a “unique broadcasting network” with an audience of some 65,000,000, broadcasting to the Soviet Union in nineteen languages and to Eastern Europe in six. Among the prominent Eastern European intellectuals who contributed to RFE transmissions, the names of Georgi Markov and Petar Semerdjiev were particularly prominent. Audience surveys and issues of RFE financing were also included in the foreign intelligence report.³⁸

The September 1978 case of the “poisoned Bulgarian umbrella” was the most widely discussed issue of cooperation between the KGB and the KDS of the previous 25 years. More than 200 Western analytical publications explored the mysterious deaths of BBC, Deutsche Welle, and RFE contributors, including Georgi Markov, and the attempted assassination of Vladimir Kostov.³⁹ Bulgarian security archives recording the many in-

³⁶ Ibid., Fond 1, Record 12, File 426a, 86–87.

³⁷ Ibid., Fond 22, Record 1, File 65, 6–9. See Document 1 in Part Six.

³⁸ Ibid., File 52, 1–17.

³⁹ The first commentaries were published in the *Washington Post* (September 13, 27, and 30, 1978). In July 2008, the BBC and *The Guardian* in London reported that Scotland Yard experts had made two new visits to Sofia to interrogate former Bulgarian KDS officers. See also Richard Cummings, *Cold War Radio: The Dangerous History of American Broadcasting in Europe, 1950–1989* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland and Company, Inc., 2009), Chapter Three, “Piccadilly versus the Tramp: The Murder of Geori Markov.”

vestigations of this notorious case over the last 15 years are not sufficient to form a firm conclusion, but some preliminary remarks are possible.

During the past decade, four generals from the Interior Ministry have been accused of destroying materials in the Georgi Markov file in January 1990. These apparently consisted of 16 volumes of documents on an operative codenamed “Skitnik” or “Vagrant.” The prosecutor’s case on the matter was opened in October 1990. Three months later, a government commission to investigate state security crimes was created, with special attention to the Markov case. The commission reviewed more than 180 boxes of Bulgarian intelligence service documentation related to this notorious case. Four books and much more media attention were devoted to the story.⁴⁰ All indirectly bolster the theory that the KDS, with technical assistance from the KGB, very likely killed Markov.⁴¹ Former KGB General Oleg Kalugin supported this version in testimony to independent investigations by Scotland Yard and the Bulgarian Justice Ministry. Other former KGB and KDS officials strongly opposed this rendering. Interrogations of more than 40 Bulgarian intelligence officers who worked in Great Britain and France between 1975 and 1979 yielded no information.

However, newly declassified documents shed light on the intensification of operations against “enemy emigration” in the mid-1970s. One of the most likely reasons for the harder line was that intelligence had been received concerning efforts to unite anti-Communist émigrés, and initiate provocative action against Bulgarian diplomatic, trade and cultural missions abroad.⁴² This harder line is evident from a meeting of the Sixth Directorate in May 1975, which resolved “[t]o continue the elaboration of joint coordination plans with the KGB for sharper active measures of real infiltration inside these centers. To intensify the work on traitors to the

⁴⁰ See Hristo Hristov’s investigative materials in *Demokratsia*, September 4–18, 2000, and Kristin Dimitrova’s analytical review in *Kultura*, April 27, 2001. In mid-2005 Hristo Hristov published his book *Kill the Vagrant*.

⁴¹ Among the suspects was the name of an Italian-born citizen of Denmark, Francesco Guillino (alias Piccadilly), who was probably arrested for smuggling in Bulgaria in 1972, and recruited as a KDS secret agent in Western Europe.

⁴² There was some intelligence information in 1974–1978 concerning attempted “terrorist acts” directed at Bulgarian diplomatic, trade, and cultural interests in West Germany, Austria, the Netherlands and France. The suspected organizations most often were the Bulgarian Liberation Organization (BOD) of Tzenko Barev and the Bulgarian National Front (BNF) of Ivan Dochev. See AMVR, Fond 1, Record 12, File 425-A, 111–112.

motherland, used by such centers, like ‘Vagrant’ (i.e., Georgi Markov), ‘Elephant,’ ‘Rat,’ ‘Carp,’ ‘Hedgehog,’ etc., aiming at their discrediting, isolation and neutralization...”⁴³ One of these operations was carried out in 1976 against RFE commentator Dimiter Inkyov (alias Velko Verin). A TV production depicting him as a traitor was broadcast and later sent to other Eastern European countries for retransmission.⁴⁴

In early 1977, intelligence concerning the activity of “enemy emigration” organizations increased, and regular dispatches were sent from the Interior Minister to Zhivkov and other Politburo members. A communiqué signed by the chief of the First Main Directorate, General Vasil Kotzev, in February 1977, announced that: “A few emigrant organizations and isolated individuals have started to make direct threats of terrorist acts against high-ranking Party and State leaders, our official missions abroad, and Bulgarian transportation vehicles.”⁴⁵ Following new intelligence on the matter in June 1977, Interior Minister General Dimiter Stoyanov delivered a 50-page report on the activity of the so-called enemy emigration and proposed measures to counter it to the Politburo. At that time, a secret Politburo decision was adopted. In March 1978, General Dimiter Stoyanov signed a special 25-page ministerial order on “[t]he organization of the State Security counterintelligence work against enemy emigration.” The order’s first paragraph insisted on the “political, ideological, and organizational demoralization, discrediting and isolation of Bulgarian enemy emigration.” State Security activity abroad was assigned to the First Main Directorate (foreign intelligence). Other directorates were obliged to place their own Western-based secret agents under the authority of foreign intelligence station chiefs.⁴⁶

In his memoirs, General Oleg Kalugin said that, in early 1978, General Dimiter Stoyanov delivered to KGB Chairman Yuri Andropov a request from Todor Zhivkov for technical support to “physically eliminate” Georgi Markov. Kalugin said the request was discussed in the presence of Vice Admiral Mikhail Usatov, the KGB deputy chairman. As chief of the Foreign Counterintelligence Department, Kalugin himself was present. The famous weapon used for this job—an umbrella that delivered poison—was provided to Sofia by Sergei Golubev, chief of the KGB’s

⁴³ AMVR, Fond 22, Record 1, File 23, 13.

⁴⁴ Ibid., Fond 1, Record 12, File 426-A, 42–43.

⁴⁵ Ibid., Fond 1, Record 12, File 425-A, 4–5.

⁴⁶ CDA, Fond 1-B, Record 504, 18–42.

First Main Directorate security office, and two of his associates. According to Kalugin, soon after Markov's murder, General Dimiter Stoyanov honored him for his role in eliminating the Bulgarian dissident and RFE collaborator.⁴⁷ In the Bulgarian State Security archives, Stoyanov's records from April 1979 document awards of Bulgarian orders and medals to Vice Admiral Mikhail Usatov, Lt. General Ivan Savchenko (the KGB's main representative in Sofia), Major General Oleg Kalugin, Colonel Sergei Golubev and four other KGB officers. However, the document did not conclusively explain why the medals were awarded. The citations may be linked to two previous documents, from January and February 1979, showing Yuri Andropov's personal orders to make awards to Colonel Blagoy Plachkov (chief of the First Main Directorate's Active Measures Department), and nine other Bulgarian State Security officers.⁴⁸

Evidence of the close collaboration between the two security services can be found in KDS intelligence reports from May 1979: "In 1978, a significantly enhanced number of joint operations and active measures... Very good results were achieved by [...] PGU KDS-PGU KGB's 18 active joint measures and actions on the USA, Maoism, Greece, and Turkey, some of them with a continuing effect. Some Bulgarian and Soviet operative officers received awards for these positive results... Our Sixth Directorate, in cooperation with the KGB Fifth Directorate, is working on 32 subversive centers and organizations, where we are using 35 secret agents. Radio Liberty and RFE Bulgarian section's collaborators and their contacts inside Bulgaria and the USSR were disclosed. We continue to maintain operative files on 11 more active RFE collaborators..."⁴⁹

In the following years, the Bulgarian Foreign Intelligence Service (First Main Directorate) continued to report regularly on RFE activities to the Interior Minister (with copies sent to other State directorates, Soviet KGB "advisers" and to Czechoslovak, East German, Polish and Hungarian State Security representatives in Sofia).

In a report from February 1980, First Main Directorate chief General Vasil Kotzev said that RFE/RL President Glen Ferguson had discussed with high-level US officials the impending reduction of 10 to 50 percent of the broadcaster's 1,700-strong workforce. An alternative was to move

⁴⁷ Oleg Kalugin, *Spymaster: My 32 Years in Intelligence and Espionage against the West* (London, 1994), 178–183.

⁴⁸ AMVR, Fond 1, Record 10-A, File 320, 211–214.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, File 344, 173–176. See Document 29, Part Six.

the RFE/RL office from Munich to the United States. At the same time, it was reported that one of Zbigniew Brzezinski's close collaborators had mentioned during a visit to Munich that Brzezinski opposed such a move.⁵⁰

A detailed intelligence report from March 1980 provided results from RFE/RL-commissioned surveys among travelers on the effectiveness of RFE programs. The report mentioned surveys by INTORA (Austria), Communication and Opinion Research (Sweden), SOFRES-Metra (France), Institut für Markt-und-Sozialforschung (West Germany), Gallup International (Great Britain) and other Western agencies. The surveys indicated that RFE's listening audience had increased substantially as a result of dramatic political events in Warsaw Pact countries. For instance, immediately after the Soviet-bloc invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968, RFE's audience increased from 37 to 80 percent; during the Polish strikes in Gdańsk, the audience increased from 59 to 83 percent in neighboring Hungary. Similar data was collected for Romania and Bulgaria, where the number of RFE adult listeners usually differed from that of Central European countries.

The audience was divided into three categories, which are presented in the table below. Although the data's reliability was difficult to confirm, and despite the fact that there was an obvious intention to include inflated figures (about 75 percent of "active" and "passive" RFE listeners in Bulgaria, for example), the table gives a comparable view of RFE's impact in each Central European country.⁵¹

Unlike other Eastern European countries, no records of secret internal surveys of RFE listenership have been found in Bulgarian archives. There is plenty of analytical information on the content and themes of RFE, BBC, VOA and Deutsche Welle programs. However, a report by General Angel Solakov, KDS chairman, at a Central Committee Plenary meeting in March 1967, informed the Communist leadership that, during the previous eight months, the State Security Committee had uncovered the names of more than 350 people (140 of them in Sofia) who

⁵⁰ Ibid., Fond 1, Record 12, File 404a, 33–35. An intelligence report from 6 March 1980 confirmed that arguments in favor of RFE's staying in Munich had been discussed at a Board for International Broadcasting meeting (Ibid., 52–54).

⁵¹ Ibid., 36–51. Similar information was received by General Georgi Anachkov, the chief of the Second Main Directorate for foreign counterintelligence (Ibid., 142–144). See Part II, Appendix C, for RFE/RL audience data that is the subject of these Bulgarian intelligence reports.

regularly corresponded with BBC World Service and BBC Bulgarian Section editors.⁵² Most, according to the report, were college and university students and young workers who were fond of Western-style “rock’n’roll,” and not particularly interested in the programs’ political commentaries.

<i>Country</i>	<i>Primary audience</i>	<i>Secondary audience that learned RFE news by other persons – frequently</i>	<i>Secondary audience that learned RFE news by other persons – occasionally</i>
Romania	53%	12%	21%
Poland	50%	10%	28%
Hungary	49%	9%	23%
Czechoslovakia	35%	12%	34%
Bulgaria	32%	12%	30%

In May 1980, General Kotzev, chief of the First Main Directorate, distributed a fresh intelligence report on US policy toward Eastern Europe. He reported that the United States had adopted a new “individualistic” approach to stemming the Soviet Union’s influence in Eastern Europe. According to the intelligence, RFE’s transmissions should have an “objective character,” and there was also talk of a “Free Europe” TV network that would be developed with Western European NATO allies.⁵³

Bulgarian state security services and the Communist Party leadership provided regular updates on RFE’s special programming in preparation for the 12th Party Congress in April 1981 and the National Party Conference in March 1984. These special programs included the celebration of Bulgaria’s 1,300-year history (1981); the Second International Children’s Assembly “Banner of Peace,” founded by Todor Zhivkov’s daughter Lyudmila (1982); the “Bulgarian connection in the attempt on the Pope’s life” campaign (1983); the country’s first organized dissident movements (1984); and reports of acts of violence against the Bulgarian Turks

⁵² CDA, Fond 1-B, Record 34, File 52.

⁵³ AMVR, Fond 22, Record 1, File 126, 1–6.

(1985).⁵⁴ In August 1981, it was reported that a “new strong figure,” emerged to replace the murdered Georgi Markov—Rumiana Uzunova.⁵⁵

During the years of Gorbachev’s *perestroika*, the Bulgarian State Security Committee became increasingly anxious about the impact of RFE’s broadcasts on different public circles in Bulgaria. According to intelligence reports from February 1987, RFE had 1,825 employees and 46 radio transmitters, and broadcast approximately 1,060 hours per week in 21 languages. In 1983, RFE had begun to modernize its technical equipment. A June 1986 directive focused on RFE’s radio propaganda on “human rights” issues in Eastern Europe.⁵⁶ As part of RFE’s new approach, the broadcaster tried to contact and interview dissidents and well-known intellectuals to influence public opinion in the country by spotlighting the Soviet Union, Poland and Hungary.⁵⁷ During these years, Rumiana Uzunova’s phone interviews with leading intellectuals on RFE became a social phenomenon that spurred increased public protests and appeals for political change.

Indicative of RFE’s impact in Bulgaria in the final years of Zhivkov’s regime was a discussion in June 1989 at a Politburo meeting presided over by the dictator himself.⁵⁸ In the final years of the Communist regime in Bulgaria, RFE transmissions were a focal point of public expression and helped to trigger radical political change. RFE broadcasts supported the consolidation of the anti-Communist opposition and its inexorable role as a political force in the country.

This analysis of Bulgarian intelligence and Security Service activities against RFE and other “subversive Western broadcasts” in the Cold War years indicates clearly that those institutions were above all instru-

⁵⁴ Ibid., Fond 1, Record 10a, File 561, 25–26; File 1308, 53–57, 144–145, 160–161; Fond 22, Record 1, File 183, 86.

⁵⁵ Ibid., Fond 1, Record 12, File 405a, 51. However, a Bulgarian state security informer codenamed “Ivanovski,” returning from Munich in March 1984 as a part of joint operation between the KGB Fifth Directorate and the Bulgarian First and Sixth Directorate, reported that three senior broadcasters of the Bulgarian section, Metodi Zachariev, Cyril Traichev and Nikolai Kalchev (alias Nikifor Kovachev), had expressed a negative attitude about Rumiana Uzunova’s capabilities, and evaluated her commentaries as having a “low level of efficiency to impact the audience.” (Ibid., Fond 22, Record 1, File 237, 13–16.)

⁵⁶ Ibid., Fond 1, Record 12, File 828, 27–35.

⁵⁷ Ibid., Fond 1, Record 12, File 822, 163–165; File 824, 8, 149, etc.

⁵⁸ See Document 3 in Part Six.

ments of official Communist Party and State policy. To use their own definition of themselves, they were “the Sword and Shield” of the Communist regime. This emerges from the analysis of practically each archival document. It is precisely this characteristic that sheds light on the structure and logic of the Communist political system, and on the causes of its inevitable collapse at the end of the 1980s.

Part 4

IMPACT OF WESTERN BROADCASTS IN THE USSR

CHAPTER 14

Soviet Reactions to Foreign Broadcasting in the 1950s

VLADIMIR TOLZ
(with JULIE CORWIN)

In spite of the extensive literature on the history of foreign broadcasting in the Soviet Union, the Soviet response to foreign radio transmissions has not yet emerged as a focus for scholarly analysis (except for the topic of jamming, examined in detail most notably by R. Plejkis).¹ Inaccessibility of Soviet documents to researchers has been the main reason for this omission.

This chapter introduces a new set of documents that until now has been unknown or at least unused, by researchers of Soviet history, including foreign broadcasting and press materials until now considered top secret. It reviews the OZP (*Osobyie zakrytye pisma*—special closed letters) from the Official Bulletin of Foreign Information of TASS, as well as TASS materials prepared for the Central Committee of the CPSU and the Council of Ministers. The TASS materials are composed of translations of foreign press articles, transcripts of speeches by political figures, and intercepts of radio broadcasts. These documents offer historians an opportunity to conduct research on themes much vaster than those of the current paper, since they provide insight into the process of decision making at the top levels of the Soviet leadership.

Also included here, for the first time in the study of Western radio broadcasting to the Soviet Union, are materials from Soviet penal records and declassified documents of the Supreme Court and Prosecutor-General of the USSR uncovered by Russian researchers. Much more remains to be learned, for we have barely begun to study the Soviet response to Western broadcasts. In the future, KGB documents that are currently inaccessible, as well as the memoirs of Soviet listeners to Western broad-

¹ Rimantas Plejkis, *Radiotsenzura* (Vilnius, 2002–2003).

casts, and Soviet opponents of such broadcasts, may supplement the materials used for this chapter.

I have also conducted interviews about foreign broadcasting with the late President of Azerbaijan, Geidar Aliev; the former President of the USSR and General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev; his assistant and former assistant Director of the Foreign Section of the Central Committee of the CPSU, Anatoly Chernyaev; as well as with former employees of the KGB, who were in one way or another concerned with “enemy voices.” General Oleg Kalugin and Colonels Oleg Nechiporenko and Yaroslav Karpovich.

The Kremlin Audience to Foreign Broadcasting

On January 1, 1953,² Iosif Stalin, the Leader of all Times and Nations, was 73 and had two months left to live. Many of the things that had once excited and agitated him—wine, women, a few friends and many enemies (or perceived enemies)—had irrevocably fallen away. Of his former passions, only two remained: power and cinema. More and more often he would invite a select few of his close associates for late nights at his “near-by dacha,” usually to treat them to an old film. In the last months of his life these associates consisted mainly of Lavrenty Beria, Nikolai Bulganin, Georgy Malenkov and Nikita Khrushchev.

The dacha movie parties also replaced Kremlin meetings of the Presidium and the Council of Ministers in the last months of the leader’s life. Stalin’s workday in the Kremlin grew shorter in this period. Besides entertaining visitors, he reviewed reports from state information services, ambassadors and foreign agents, daily communiqués from the KGB and Ministry of Internal Affairs, ministerial reports—typical reading matter for a head of state, and the basis for executive decision-making.

Stalin systematically received information on foreign radio broadcasts. It came to him either in the form of the OZP or as part of the TASS Information and included intercepts of radio broadcasts,³ translated ar-

² Starting two months prior to Stalin’s death allows us to compare Stalin’s perception of Western broadcasts with the perception of Stalin’s successors. That way, we can appraise more fully the transformation of Soviet attitudes towards radio broadcasts right up to the cessation of jamming.

³ “Radio intercepts” in this period were defined as translations of transcripts from sound recordings of broadcasts. As a general rule, the translation was

ticles from the foreign press, and transcripts of speeches by foreign political figures. Archival annotations indicating the addressees of the TASS Information included the Central Committee and Council of Ministers; however, in Stalin's time they were received only by Stalin himself and Malenkov. Materials were prepared in four copies: two for Stalin, one for Malenkov, and one retained in the Fourth Department of TASS (see Document 14 in Part Six for an example).

The themes of the broadcasts intercepted and transcribed for Stalin during this two-month period reflected the issues that he considered the most important at that time. Above all others in importance was the "Jewish problem."⁴ One contemporary Russian historian has described the emphasis on this issue during the last year of Stalin's life as "the anti-Semitic death throes of the dictator."⁵ Stalin was also keenly interested in the reactions of Western societies and governments to his anti-Semitic actions, and in any change to his image abroad as a result of these actions.⁶

complete and literal. This particularity was emphasized in the document heading: "Protocol Transcription." In some cases the text of the intercept contained lacunae noted by the compilers of the OZP or TASS Information as reception defects, and in rare cases they consisted of paraphrases, (see, for example, a translation from the Japanese, in State Archive of the Russian Federation, (GARF), fond R-4459, op. 38, delo 477, ll. 1–4). Below the text, which in Stalin's time was always marked "top secret," stood the initials of the translator and typist. The document header also contained information on the number of copies produced, the date of production, and a reference number. It further included information on the source of the broadcast (station name), language, and time.

⁴ See documents from February 14, 16, and 18, 1953.

⁵ G. V. Kostyrchenko, *Tainaia politika Stalina: Vlast' i antisemitizm* (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia, 2001). Additional indirect evidence of the importance of this topic is provided, in my opinion, by the fact the first steps taken by Stalin's successors following his death (both secretly and openly) had to do with the revision of this policy: the release of Molotov's wife from prison, and the publication on April 4 of the report of the Ministry of Internal Affairs concerning the Kremlin doctors, who had until recently been referred to as "killers in white robes."

⁶ It hardly seems like coincidence that the compilers of these radio intercepts should have included this item from a BBC press review taken from among the multitude of Western broadcasts on anti-Semitism: "The portrait of good old Uncle Joe has disappeared forever. Instead of it we have a new portrait of a terrible Georgian tyrant, evil and ignorant, who, just like Hitler, was capable of international adventures and was also capable of catastrophic errors in judgment." [Reverse translation from Russian.]

Stalin, as we know, always paid particular attention to the formation and “production” of his own image. He used these broadcast intercepts to try to manage his image overseas. The reports allowed him to supplement the information he acquired from ambassadors and agents abroad regarding both overt and subtle political reactions to his actions.⁷

During this period, OZP and TASS Information reports were used mainly to present information. They were not intended as counterpropaganda. The problem of counterpropaganda was not yet acute, since the broadcasting power of Western radio stations at this time was limited, as was the audience in the USSR. Only in the headings used by TASS when transcribing the radio intercepts can one detect an element of the counterpropaganda that would emerge later. Such headings included “VOA’s methods of spiteful anti-Soviet propaganda,” “Eisenhower’s provocation,” and “Anti-Soviet propaganda of Radio Tokyo in connection with the USSR’s breaking off diplomatic relations with Israel,” to cite just a few. We should not assume that the compilers of the radio intercepts were trying to subject their small audience to counter-propagandistic influence. The headings were simply a means of distancing themselves from the ideological “monstrosities” of the “enemy” and demonstrating their full loyalty to the Leader.⁸

The content and function of the radio intercepts did not immediately change after the death of Stalin on March 5, 1953. However, the event undoubtedly brought chaos to the ranks of the intercept compilers in the Kremlin, since they no longer understood for whom they were working. On March 5 in the Kremlin, a short dispatch, unique in that it was prepared for an audience of one, appeared:

⁷ For example, the radio intercept of a Voice of America broadcast on the defection of Soviet soldier Kulikov to West Berlin, and Eisenhower’s New Year address to “the youth behind the Iron Curtain” (documents dated 2 January 1953).

⁸ Here is a characteristic example of a text that might frighten the compilers and prompt them to distance themselves (OZP of 1 January 1953): “We ourselves know that there are, of course, unbalanced heads and weak souls who are incapable of critical and independent thought, and for this reason they obediently repeat everything they are told and believe everything they are told. They believe that Stalin is a great genius, and that Soviet policies lead to peace, and that freedom reigns in the USSR. But we do not doubt that there are so few sincere believers that they are not worth speaking about. The others merely act as though they believe, while in their souls they well understand the state of things and properly evaluate the situation.”

Memo No. 461
5 March 1953

Top Secret
Copy No. 2

Paris Radio on the Comments of Smith and Davies

(Paris, broadcasting to the Balkans, French lang., 5th of March, 23:00, protocol version)

A triumvirate consisting of Molotov, Malenkov, and Beria will take over leadership of the Soviet Union. Such is the opinion of former US Ambassador to Moscow General [Walter Bedell] Smith. Such is also the opinion of [Joseph E.] Davies, who was the first American ambassador to the Soviet Union.

Two copies only.

No. 1—to Comrade G. M. Malenkov; No. 2—in the office of the 4th Directorate of TASS.⁹

The compilers could not of course distribute reports based on American prognoses (which later proved incorrect) of who would henceforth be their clients in the Kremlin. However, by March 8 new addressees had already been assigned.⁹ The order enumerated on the documents was Malenkov, Beria, Molotov, and Khrushchev.

This foursome was naturally interested in what was said abroad about them, their entourage, and the balance of power in the Soviet leadership, which, as we know now, was highly fluid at that time. Their interests were the same as those of foreign broadcasters. Here are a few examples of the kind of information received in the Kremlin during this period:

SWISS SHORT-WAVE TRANSMITTER,
French Lang., 7 March, 14:45 [...]

Control over the Party is in the hands of Malenkov. The police are in the hands of Beria, and Molotov seems to have a certain influence over the administrative organs. As far as the army is concerned, it is presumed that leaders such as Bulganin, [Vasily] Sokolovsky and [Aleksandr] Vasilevsky will remain faithful to the system to which they owe

⁹ The mechanics underlying this decision and the circumstances in which it was communicated to the compilers of the radio intercepts have not yet been established.

their careers. [...] As a result, we do not believe at the given moment that any serious changes can come about.

Malenkov has no love for Europe. But then again, he does not even know it. He has only been to Prague, and even then for a brief visit. Malenkov believes that the Soviet Union should, above all, be concerned with the expansion of its influence in Asia and the augmentation of its economic and military might.¹⁰

8 March 1953

[...] Today, the Voice of America asserted in a program for Communist countries a few hours after Georgy Malenkov came to power in Russia, that this moment signifies only the beginning of a power struggle. His appointment does not signify that the serious problems of succession in the Soviet Union have come to a final resolution.

In this radio intercept, broadcast in 46 languages, it was described that “the definitive transfer of power may be decided only after a drawn-out fight between the supreme representatives, the kind which frequently leads to violence, intrigue, and treachery.”

It remains unclear whether Malenkov will be able to hold on to power, and whether his evidently abandoned and defeated rivals, will remain calm, or whether they will plan a conspiracy to bring about his complete downfall. The comparatively quick appointment of a ‘frowning and harsh’ Malenkov, evidently, bears witness to the hopes of the Kremlin to escape a power struggle.¹¹

The Kremlin foursome was also interested in Western appraisals of the prospects of the empire they had inherited from Stalin.

Voice of America insists that the truth of this statement is supported by the fact that Marshal Stalin’s death was initially kept secret in order to prepare a semblance of unity. “However the death of Stalin affects the Soviet ruling elite and the Russian people, one thing is certain: the totalitarian system and the legacy of Stalin will fail on one glorious day of its own internal weaknesses. This is the unanimous conclusion of historians, whose objective is the study and evaluation of the lessons of world history.”¹²

¹⁰ Commentary by René Pajo, GARF. F. R-4459. Op. 38. D. 478. L. 86–90.

¹¹ GARF, F. R-4459. Op. 38. D. 478. L. 82–83.

¹² *Ibid.*, L. 83.

For some time after the death of Stalin, the compilers of the radio intercepts continued, seemingly by inertia, to follow themes of interest to the dead dictator, such as the “Jewish problem,” Soviet-Israeli relations,¹³ and any news about Yugoslavia.¹⁴ During the last period of his life, Stalin had wanted to arrange the murder of Yugoslav President Josip Tito.¹⁵ Such themes were still relevant to Stalin’s successors. However, other traditional themes that had interested Stalin, such as deserters and unmasked spies, also continued to appear in the compilations.¹⁶

But new leaders facing new political problems wanted a host of fresh topics to be monitored and transcribed in the broadcast intercepts. The most important new direction for readers of the intercepts was information regarding Western reactions to the beginning of the still secret process of de-Stalinization.¹⁷ The four readers of the radio intercepts,

¹³ See, for instance, OZP #1047, 21 July 1953, ll. 01-02 rev. (GARF f. R-6991, d. 497, ll. 172–173).

¹⁴ See, for instance, “Gnusnoe zaiavlenie Didira” (“The disgusting assertion of [Vladimir] Dedijer”), Voice of America, April 6, 1953, Informatsionnye svedeniia TASS, #648, 7 April 1953 (GARF, f. R-4459, op. 38, d. 478, l. 163); “Titovskoe radio o demonstratsii v Goritse” (“Tito’s radio on the demonstration at Gorica”), ZP #1047, 21 July 1953 (GARF, f. R-4459, d. 497, l. 179).

¹⁵ See P. A. Sudoplatov, *Spetsoperatsii: Lubianka i Kreml’, 1930–1950 gody* (Moscow: Olma-Press, 1997); A. I. Kolpakidi and D. P. Prokhorov, *KGB: Spetsoperatsii sovetskoi razvedki* (Moscow: Olimp-Astrel-AST, 2000) 576–590.

¹⁶ See, for instance, transcripts of the program “Zametki byvshego sovetskogo grazhdanina” (“Notes of a former Soviet citizen”), Voice of America, December 31, 1952 (GARF, f. R-4459, op. 38, d. 481, l. 31–33); the report on the defection of Soviet soldier Kulikov in East Berlin, “Priemy antisovetskoi propagandy ‘Golosa SshA’” (Methods of anti-Soviet propaganda of the ‘Voice of America’), Voice of America, January 2, 1953 (GARF, f. R-4459, op. 28, d. 481, l. 105); and the related defection of five Soviet officers, who “appealed to the Western powers with a statement urging them to make use of the weakening of the Soviet regime following Stalin’s death for a broad psychological offensive with the goal of overthrowing the Bolshevik dominance,” Informatsionnye svedeniia TASS #827, May 13, 1953 (GARF f. R-4459, op. 38, d. 478, l. 246). On defectors and unmasked spies, see also “Londonskoe radio o prigovore suda v Tselle i BRK o perebezhchike iz GDR, OZP, July 23, 1953, ll. 05-06 rev. (GARF, f. R-4459, op. 38, d. 497, ll. 225, 227).

¹⁷ “Antisovetskaia propaganda amerikanskogo radio na Vengriiu” Radio Free Europe, Hungarian language, May 4, 1953, Informatsionnye svedeniia TASS #666, May 9, 1953 (GARF f. R-4459, op. 38, d. 478, l. 185): “Stalin died a month ago, however the new Soviet leaders have already taken measures to end his glorification on Soviet radio and television. In other countries behind

Malenkov, Beria, Bulganin and Khrushchev, were particularly interested in what “enemy voices” were saying about instability at the very top of the Soviet Party-State pyramid, and the dealings and decisions of their comrades within the Stalinist circle.¹⁸ Selections of radio broadcasts of this type often included “*kompromat*,” or materials compromising one or another political figure. The subjects of this type of report were, as a rule, not informed. Typical of this type of intercept was a series about Marshal G. K. Zhukov, who had been the First Deputy Minister of Defense since March 1952, and who became, from February 1955 through October 1957, Minister of Defense of the USSR. A collection of “*radio kompromat*” on Zhukov began in October 1954.¹⁹ Zhukov never received these intercepts. However, he, along with 16 other high-ranking Soviet leaders, did receive intercepts of broadcasts by Radio Free Europe and the BBC in July 1956 relating to “*kompromat*” on Khrushchev. The intercepts included reports about Khrushchev’s drunken “rash statements”

the Iron Curtain, the name of Stalin is still in use in relation to various aspects of communist exploits, but the glorification of Stalin has ceased in the entire Communist world;” “Izmyshleniia amerikanskoi radiostantsii,” Radio Free Europe, Hungarian language, May 4, 1953, Informatsionnye svedeniia TASS #787, May 5, 1953 (GARF, f. R-4459, op. 38, d. 478, l. 227): “The Kremlin intends to finish off the cult of Stalin. The Communist Party of France had wished to establish monuments to Stalin in a number of French cities, however, the Kremlin responded negatively and the Communists of France were forced to abandon the project.” See also the radio intercept about Vasily Stalin, Informatsionnye svedeniia TASS #812, May 10, 1953 (GARF, f. R-4459, op. 38, d. 478, l. 237).

¹⁸ On Bulganin, Sokolovsky and Vasilevsky, see Informatsionnye svedeniia TASS #507, March 8, 1953 (GARF, f. R-4459, op. 38, d. 478, l. 88); on Poskrebyshv, see Informatsionnye svedeniia TASS #773, April 29, 1953 (GARF, f. R-4459, op. 38, d. 478, ll. 217–218); on Voroshilov, see Informatsionnye svedeniia TASS #795, May 7, 1953, (GARF, f. R-4459, op. 38, d. 478, ll. 230–231); on Shtemenko, see Informatsionnye svedeniia TASS #882, September 23, 1954, (GARF, f. R-4459, op. 38, d. 478, l. 88).

¹⁹ Paraphrase from a program of Radio Free Europe, Hungarian language, September 22, 1954, 16:00, of an article by Harrison Salisbury in the *New York Times*, which contained the worrisome (to the recipients of the radio intercepts) phrase, “Soviet military leaders are gathering around Marshal Zhukov,” Informatsionnye svedeniia TASS #882, 23 September 1954, (GARF, f. R-4459, op. 38, d. 547, l. 61). This report was sent to “the nine”—Bulganin, [Kliment] Voroshilov, [Lazar] Kaganovich, Malenkov, [Anastas] Mikoyan, [Vyacheslav] Molotov, [Mikhail] Pervukhin, [Maksim] Saburov, Khrushchev.

at a reception in honor of the chief of staff of the USAF, General Nathan Twining.²⁰

Personnel changes in the Soviet leadership of the 1950s–1960s and internal struggles within the Communist bloc served to widen the circle of consumers of Western information within the Kremlin and just outside of it. Being a regular recipient of OZP in its full edition (especially receiving two copies as Stalin had) doubtless signified that one had attained the highest level of the Soviet hierarchy. By the same token, exclusion from the lists, or reduction in the amount of data received, would be a sign of diminishing significance in the Party and State and in some cases banishment from political (or occasionally, in a later period, physical) life.²¹ In any case, the goal of foreign broadcasters to be heard by “the Politburo, the Central Committee, the *apparatus* of the Central Committee, and those who stood at the top of Soviet society”²² was achieved—although such an aspiration may have struck those concerned as idiotic. However, the number of these Kremlin listeners was not large. During the 1950s it did not exceed 44 persons.

Western Broadcasting and Social Change

The actual number of non-elite listeners to Western radio stations in the 1950s has never been ascertained. When jamming of Voice of America and BBC was partially lifted, in September 1959 and March 1960 respectively, Leonid Ilychev, the leader of the propaganda and agitation bureau

²⁰ “Utverzheniia amerikanskoi radiostantsii,” Radio Free Europe, Hungarian language, July 11, 1956, 10:00, and BBC, Russian language, July 11, 1956, 17:15, Informatsionnye svedeniia TASS #581, 12 July 1956, (GARF, f. R-4459, op. 38, d. 693, ll. 63–64).

²¹ An exception to this is A.A. Gromyko, who became Foreign Minister of the USSR in February 1957. In 1958, his name disappeared from the list of recipients of the OZP, but this was not connected to a diminution in status. Gromyko was one of the few—the others were Stalin, Malenkov, Bulganin and Khrushchev—who received the OZP in two copies. When he became Foreign Minister, he had the unique opportunity of receiving foreign information in a volume that would make any “alteration” impossible. Gromyko’s exclusion from the list of OZP recipients is an indirect sign of the crisis of this institution: The monopoly on “anti-Soviet” information had been breached.

²² The quotation is from an interview by the author with one of the former directors of the BBC’s Russian Service, Frank Williams.

of the Central Committee, was charged with evaluating the extent of their audience. Speaking to the presidium of the Central Committee of the CPSU, he reported the following:

At this time in the Soviet Union there are some 20 million radios capable of receiving foreign radio broadcasts. It is difficult to draw a clear picture of how many in the USSR listen to foreign radio stations such as the Voice of America and the BBC, although indirect evidence of a certain level of interest in foreign radio stations exists.²³

The expression “a certain level of interest” corresponds to Khrushchev’s attitude toward Western radio stations. He told a meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee some three years later, “There will be a few listeners—let them listen.”²⁴ However, Ilychev’s report that suggested interest in Western radio broadcasts was more widespread:

In March of this year [1960] it was established that in Tajikistan, people are listening to foreign radio stations not only in apartments, but also in public places, such as tea houses, primarily due to the low quality of official republic broadcasting. The Central Committee of the CPSU called on the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Tajikistan to pay particular attention to this fact. In Georgia, Azerbaijan, Perm, Moscow, Lugansk, and other *oblasts* [regions] a widely accepted practice has developed of adapting radios to listen to foreign radio broadcasts. For about 250–300 rubles, some invalids from the war with knowledge of radio mechanics as well as radio amateurs can convert radios for short-wave reception in the ten meter band and higher. At such a range, one can only receive foreign radio stations. Even in Moscow, in the main shopping center GUM and elsewhere, people unaffiliated with the stores frequently approach customers buying radios, offering to convert their new radios to receive additional short-wave frequencies.

During discussions in the Bureau of Propaganda and Agitation of the Central Committee of the CPSU, chairmen of the Uzbek, Lvov, Odessa, Tomsk and other radio committees reported that there are regu-

²³ Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv noveishei istorii, Russian State Archive of Contemporary History (RGANI), f. 89, (Constitutional court vs. CPSU), per. 46. D. 14. L.; full translation in Document 47, Section Six.

²⁴ Presidium of the Central Committee CPSU, 1954–1964.

lar listeners in their areas to the programs of the Voice of America and the BBC. Questions from the audience at lectures as well as letters to the Central Committee of the CPSU, Radio Committee, and other organizations also confirmed this.²⁵

Sociological research carried out by the KGB in 1976 also uncovered an increase in listeners among certain social groups to Western radio stations in the USSR. These groups were the focus of the KGB's special scrutiny.

The study, "Audiences to Western radio stations in the city of Moscow," undertaken by the Bureau of Applied Social Studies of the Institute of Sociological Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, found that 80% of elementary school students and around 90% of the upper-classmen of high schools, professional-technical institutes [GPTU] and technical schools listen to [foreign] radio stations more or less regularly. For the majority of these students, listening to foreign radio has become a habit (32% of students and 59.2% of high-school students were listening no less frequently than once or twice a week).

Another study, "The Formation of Omsk Students' Worldview and Values," found that 39.7% of students polled listened periodically to foreign radio broadcasts. A similar picture appears in studies of the audience to Finnish television programs in the Estonian SSR. Persons under the age of 30 were most often drawn to Finnish television channels.²⁶

These figures caused serious concern among the State Security services. Although the authenticity of the data is suspect, since it was coerced from study subjects, differences of opinion about audience size in the USSR should not distract us from other important questions that until now "serious scholars have neglected."²⁷ Who listened to foreign radio

²⁵ RGANI. f. 89 (Constitutional court vs. CPSU), per. 46, d. 14, ll. 1–2.

²⁶ F. D. Bobkov (Head of the Fifth Directorate of the KGB), "Analiticheskaia spravka o kharaktere i prichinakh negativnykh proiavlenii sredi uchashcheisia i studencheskoi molodezhi," 12 December 1976. See also the resolution of the Secretariat of the Central Committee in connection with this, in Vladimir Bukovsky, "Sovetskii arkhiv," 1.1, 0137, 28 Dec. 1976. For estimates of the Soviet audience to Western stations see Chapters Five and Six.

²⁷ This was the opinion expressed by Vadim Zagladin, the former assistant director of the International Department of the Central Committee, in conversation with the author. See V. Tolz, "Rodina slyshit..." pt. 5.

in the 1950s? Why did they listen? What were their reactions to the arguments put forth in foreign programs? Of what consequence were these reactions?

It is impossible to answer these questions without an appreciation of the mindset of listeners to foreign radio broadcasts, and their relationship to their own country and the outside world. The first generation of listeners, who emerged during the second half of the 1940s and the beginning of the 1950s, when Western radios began broadcasting to the USSR, had a world view that was militaristic, and often eschatological. It had been formed under the influence of Soviet propaganda, the atmosphere of the Cold War, and the contrast between the reality of Soviet daily life and information about conditions abroad. The Soviet population, at least that part of the population that listened to foreign broadcasting, viewed Soviet authorities as a kind of occupation regime, while they saw “foreign forces” as potential liberators, fighting against the “Red Dragon.” This was particularly the case in territories that had only recently become Soviet: the Baltic region, Western Ukraine, Belarus, and Moldavia. In this context, some listeners viewed foreign radio stations such as the Voice of America and Radio Liberty as the personification of the expected liberators and the authorities to whom prayers could be directed.

In April 1957, a Lithuanian collective farmer named I.R. Petrokas sent what he titled “a letter from Hell” to the editors of Voice of America; unfortunately the letter ended up with the KGB. Describing the miserable conditions of Lithuanian peasants, the author appealed to compatriots abroad: “Dear Lithuanians and other non-Communists, Beware of the Red Devil so that he cannot destroy you and those dear to you. This Red Dragon devours all. It is better that the entire world be destroyed than that it be ruled by Communism.”²⁸ A letter dated July 26, 1959 from stoker V. D. Naletaev,²⁹ was delivered to an American journalist in Sverdlovsk, who was accompanying the US Vice-President Richard Nixon on a train journey through the USSR.³⁰ Naletaev wrote, “To the President of

²⁸ GARF, f. R-8131, op. 31, d. 82267, ll. 2–3.

²⁹ Naletaev, born in 1922, was prosecuted under article 58:10 of the Penal Code of the RSFSR, and punished on 21 September 1959 with seven years of jail.

³⁰ “With their departure from Sverdlovsk, the Americans left the letter received from Naletaev on the table of room 324 of the Bol’shoi Ural hotel, which had been occupied by journalist Martin Powell [?],” GARF, f. R-8131, op. 31, d. 86761, l. 3.

the United States and the great American people, We wait for you to liberate us from our Communist slavery.” He signed his letter, “The Russian people.”³¹

Soviet archives contain many other similar examples. They all reflect a mindset that was extremely widespread in Soviet society, particularly in the first half of the 1950s, though still somewhat tenuous. It can be characterized briefly as follows: hope for war as punishment for the [Soviet] authorities; faith that war would soon begin; aspiration to liberation, even if the price is ruin.

Strangely, this readiness for massive fatalities in the future war coexisted with a faith in personal salvation. Such hope for the future was perhaps fueled by the principle that, “The enemy of my enemy (i.e. Soviet power) is my friend, ally and defender.” The image of such possible allies sometimes took on a completely fantastic form. It is sufficient to recall the case, already recorded in literature, of the sign laid out in pebbles along a railroad track in the early 1950s, in conformity with Soviet style: “Long live Eisenhower and Hitler!”

Legal cases brought in connection with “anti-Soviet” remarks in the 1950s provide multiple illustrations of this mindset. The death of Stalin galvanized hopes for change. The postwar period was later described in poetry and historiography as “a time of unrealized hope.” Many commentators for foreign radio stations spoke of possible “changes in the Kremlin.” Listeners understood these commentaries as confirmation of the validity of their hope, although Western commentary might differ in its details from what the Soviet people actually said amongst themselves:

Learning of Stalin’s illness, prisoner F.N. Lobachev cursed foully and said, “If he dies, it’ll be easier for us.” According to investigative materials, at the end of 1951, Lobachev inveighed against Soviet power, Stalin, and collective farms, saying that waiting for amnesty was pointless. Prisoners work on all construction projects, and their freedom can be won only by the Americans when they conquer the USSR.³²

G. I. Nastasiuk, a collective farmer from Moldavia, learning of Stalin’s death said, “It would be good if it weren’t only Stalin but all the Communists who died during the course of the next three days then there

³¹ Ibid., ll. 2–3.

³² GARF, f. R-8131, op. 31, d. 40208; f. R-9474, op. 41, d. 1454.

wouldn't be any kolkhozy." From 1949 to 1952, Nastasiuk cursed the collective farms and said that collective farmers receive nothing for their work, that Stalin leads incorrectly, and that in the spring there would be a war with the Americans, resulting in the defeat of Soviet power.³³

In general, criminal files of the time cited listening to foreign radio programs as additional evidence of the delinquent nature of the accused. Sometimes such a habit was even viewed as the ideological source of their criminal activity.

F.N. Panfilov, a railroad controller, on March 5, 1953, in the Kursk rail station in Moscow said to a colleague on the occasion of Stalin's death that "the sacred spot cannot remain empty" and that there are already likely candidates for that job that may be no worse than Stalin. In conversations between 1948 and 1955, he criticized Soviet leaders, collective farms, and said that people lived better abroad among other things. He listened and repeated the broadcasts of Voice of America.³⁴

V.I. Sokolova, a teacher from Gorky *oblast*, on March 6, 1953 told in the teacher's room of the content of a Voice of America program on the death of Stalin that included rumors regarding Stalin's poisoning at the hands of a doctor. In addition, in March 1952, she 'distorted Soviet reality' during a history lesson by saying that during the construction of a paper mill, [Soviet authorities] in 1928 brought in machinery and mechanics from America.³⁵

Role of Soviet Propaganda

Among residents of the Soviet Union, who had been cut off from the rest of the world at the beginning of the Cold War by an iron curtain, images of "America" and "abroad" were vague and fragmentary. This was due in part to their still vivid memories of pre-Soviet days in both the old territories of the Soviet Union and the newly-annexed Western territories. They found the characterizations of "accursed capitalism" and "tsarism"

³³ GARF, f. R-8131, op. 31, d. 42080.

³⁴ GARF, f. R-8131, op 31, d. 43129.

³⁵ GARF, f. 9474, op. 40, d. 559.

strange, since they remembered above all the happiness and attractiveness of the past in stark contrast to the deprivations of their present reality. Soldiers who returned from defeated Germany and other countries of Europe shared this perception, and described enthusiastically the amenities of everyday life, and the availability of public services. They talked about the “wealth” of people in the West, and about the sympathetic Allies, the Americans and the English, so different from the beasts in helmets portrayed in Soviet newspapers. Also important were the so-called “trophy” works of Western cinema that Stalin allowed to be shown in Soviet theaters.

Soviet propaganda played a significant role in the formation of mass attitudes towards the West and capitalism. This propaganda so furiously and coarsely disavowed the obvious that it undercut belief in its own message. The suppressed and suffocated postwar population was unconvinced by the dismal images of “the bourgeois world” and “the realm of exploitation and cash,” perceiving instead an image of a foreign (particularly American) “earthly paradise.”³⁶ Already at the beginning of the 1960s, two prisoners wrote complaints and petitions, in which they demanded exile from the USSR, “to any capitalist country, so that I may die like a slave, but at least in a capitalist country.”³⁷ O. Edelman, a researcher into Soviet “sedition,” correctly notes that “it is possible to speak of Soviet Communist ideology as a myth, built on all the rules of that genre.”³⁸

³⁶ One of many examples of “sign reversal” in people’s reading of Soviet propaganda is the case of Maiorov, sentenced in 1964 for anti-Soviet propaganda and agitation (Article 70 of the Penal Code of the RSFSR): “I read the book *Face to Face with America* [a Soviet propaganda publication about Khrushchev’s first trip to the USA. The authors, a group of Soviet journalists, including A. Adzhubei, Khrushchev’s son-in-law, received the Lenin Prize for this work], where an unemployed American writes a letter to Khrushchev. In it he says that he was riding in his car, turned on the radio, and began to listen to Khrushchev’s speech. The following day at work, during a cigarette break, I mentioned that I read a book where an unemployed American has his own car, while here you can work and never be able to afford a car. The prosecutor interpreted my comments as praise for the American way of life and detraction of the Soviet [way of life],” GARF, f. R-81131, op. 31, d. 98849, ll. 3–7.

³⁷ GARF, f. R-8131, op. 31, d. 94674, l. 18.

³⁸ The view of communism as a classical mythological system had been proposed earlier by Mircea Eliade in *Aspekty mifa* (Moscow, 1995), 182–183; *Mify, snovideniia, misterii* (Moscow, 1996), 25; and *Sviashchennoe i mirskoe* (Moscow, 1994), 128.

Mythologized consciousness conceives of the world in terms of dualistic opposition, and for this reason doubt and personal experience can invert the data of the Soviet propaganda myth, leaving intact the stable cultural stereotype. The USSR is simply equated then with chaos, and the external world with cosmos...

Political and everyday reality, with which Soviet man collided, and over which he meditated, entered into the paradigm of thought that existed in the sphere of collective unconsciousness. The Cold War, which brought down the “Iron Curtain,” not only amplified the international isolation of the USSR, a state already closed and consumed with the construction of socialism “in one country,” but also emphasized the demarcation of space into two worlds. Propaganda exaggerated the bleak aspects of the bourgeois world, and particularly its personification—the United States of America.

At the same time, the sedition present in the popular consciousness, gave rise to a sense of America as an “earthly paradise.” America, and indeed any country of Western Europe, was understood to be the antagonist of the USSR in everything, and if propaganda asserted that “everything was bad” there and we had everything good, then in fact it follows that there, on the contrary, everything is fine.³⁹

Although the unintended results of Soviet propaganda corresponded to the goals of foreign radio propaganda’s depiction of the Western way of life and Western values, Western broadcasters could not have foreseen some of the Soviet population’s conclusions about Western life:⁴⁰

If these boots were to be shown in America, people would run away. In America there are also boots, but they are the type only 16 people in the USSR wear, those who work in the Kremlin.⁴¹ And if the Soviet press reports on the lack of real democracy in the USA, the power of money, and bribery of voters, then the populace concludes: ‘In the Soviet Union

³⁹ See V.A. Kozlov, S.V. Mironenko, O.V. Edelman, *Kramola: inakomyslie v SSSR pri Khrushcheve i Brezhneve, 1953–1982 gg. Rassekrechennye Dokumenty Verkhovnogo Suda I Prokuratury SSSR* (Materik, 2005).

⁴⁰ These examples are taken from Kozlov, Mironenko, Edelman, op.cit.

⁴¹ GARF, f. R-8131, op. 31, d. 84264, l. 29.

no one is interested in voting, because nothing will come from a single vote, but in America it is a different matter, every vote is worth money.⁴²

Impact of Foreign Broadcasts

Equally unpredictable were the reactions of the Soviet audience to the multitude of reports in Western broadcasts regarding the fall from the Kremlin Olympus of one or another “god” between 1950 and 1960. Here we witness a particular streak of the national character, cultivated in Russian literature: “kindness to the fallen,” more recently expressed in the transformation of mass feeling towards the overthrown Mikhail Gorbachev. In the 1950s, the recipients of such unexpected warmth were the previously unpopular Beria who was arrested and executed,⁴³ Molotov, Malenkov, Kaganovich, and Shepilov, all of whom were expelled from the Party, Voroshilov who was removed from the epicenter of power,⁴⁴ and Zhukov, who also fell from grace.⁴⁵ The attitude towards Khrushchev underwent a similar transformation among listeners to foreign broadcasting, although only within the narrow circle of the liberal intelligentsia. Those who ridiculed him during his tenure as “corn boy,” “tourist,” “Tsar Nikita,” and those who, like Western radio stations, expressed dislike for his internal and foreign policies, particularly his Virgin Soil program and corn-planting scheme, or the repression of the insurrection in Hungary, later began to remember him sympathetically as a “fighter against the cult [of personality]” and a man who released

⁴² GARF, f. R-8131, op. 31, op. 87037, l. 6.

⁴³ Russian scholars have noted 65 utterances of an “anti-Soviet nature” in relation to Beria, of which 52 gave a “positive evaluation.” See Kozlov, Mironenko, Edelman, *op cit*.

⁴⁴ “In the spring of 1960 [...] A. Suiazov said that we could not know what was going on in the government. He said that Molotov and Voroshilov had built Soviet power, that they had traversed a difficult path, and now they are called evil. Suiazov often commented that workers in the USA live better than in the USSR. We argued with him and told him to read the papers, but he said that the papers were full of lies. He listens to the Voice of America and says he knows the whole truth about life in the USA,” GARF, f. R-8131, op. 31, d. 96116, ll. 32–35.

⁴⁵ See Kozlov, Mironenko, Edelman, *op.cit*, commentary by O. Edelman, 157 : “We are aware of 21 sympathetic responses to Zhukov; but when he returned to power and participated in the plenum on the anti-Party group, then together with Khrushchev he began to receive criticism (seven cases known to us).”

people from the camps. Such sympathy was also directed toward other personalities mentioned in Western radio broadcasts who had been forcibly removed from official Soviet history. This attitude towards the de-canonized heroes of the Soviet past gained strength particularly after June 1956, when Western radio stations began to report on and add their commentary to Khrushchev's secret speech to the Twentieth Party Congress.

In general, it can be said that, from the middle of the 1950s, "the fact of regular listening to foreign voices" (as the Central Committee and the KGB called it) gradually solidified into a nationwide tradition, despite all of the difficulties created by jamming. This tradition was later captured with the rhyme:

*There is a habit in Russia -
Nightly listening to the BBC.*

It should also be noted that the daily schedule of some listeners was aligned on the schedules of these broadcasts and the best listening times. A witness in the case of Petropavlovsk port worker G. M. Novikov, convicted in 1958, testified that: "After work, he never stayed late. When asked why he was in such a hurry, he would say that he wanted to listen to Voice of America. During the day, reception was poor, but at night it was better."⁴⁶

The picture of the world created in the minds of listeners remained different from what was actually said in foreign broadcasts, although it agreed in essence with the information and propagandistic aims of Western broadcasts into the Soviet Union. According to the witness against Novikov, the port worker "declared that if the Americans were to appear in Kamchatka, he [Novikov] would get the first chair and the Communists would be hanged... He also said that the Americans would bomb the snake-pit of Moscow, but we have nothing and cannot fight. He spoke of Hungary, saying that if it weren't for our army, that country would now have a government like Austria's."⁴⁷

The most common type of social activity inspired by Western radio broadcasts was probably discussions of programs that someone had heard. From the mid-1950s, this activity became popular throughout the Soviet society. For example, a 1954 criminal file on V.I. Boyarinov reported that, while drunk, he tore up four newspapers bearing Stalin's por-

⁴⁶ GARF, f. R-8131, op. 31, d. 89266, l. 8.

⁴⁷ Ibid., ll. 8–10.

trait, and together with his friends spread news stories heard from Voice of America and BBC broadcasts.⁴⁸ Meanwhile an “elite” case is mentioned in a report by KGB Director I.A. Serov to the Central Committee concerning the academician L.D. Landau on January 20, 1957: “Landau is home most of the time, where he regularly listens to foreign radio broadcasts and discusses anti-Soviet themes he has heard on the radio with his numerous visitors. The main themes discussed by him and his circle are anti-Soviet themes, the statements of foreign radio, and cynical discussions of relations with various women.”⁴⁹

For many decades, foreign radio made up part of the ideological training of Soviet rebels and dissidents, and, if they were detained by police organs, this constituted evidence of criminal activity. To cite just one example: In the 1975 case against G.I. Ermakov, the accused admitted “his complete guilt and testified that he entered on the path of criminal activity under the influence of anti-Soviet broadcasts of foreign radio stations.” A search of Ermakov’s apartment led to the discovery of his diary, in which he wrote down the content of the “anti-Soviet” broadcasts of Deutsche Welle, BBC and Voice of America.⁵⁰ The high level of faith in the veracity of the stations’ information is illustrated by a case in which the author of an “anti-Soviet” leaflet wrote of events he knew of only through Voice of America.⁵¹

It has already been noted that foreign radio programs inspired responses from listeners within the USSR in letter form.⁵² To this should be

⁴⁸ GARF, f. R-8131, op. 31, d. 45697.

⁴⁹ *Novoe vremya*, #50 (1998).

⁵⁰ GARF, f. R-8131, op. 32, d. 8176, ll. 10–13; GARF, f. R-8131, op. 36, d. 6263, ll. 20–22.

⁵¹ See the 1955 case of V.I. Savin, sentenced to seven years of prison for distributing the following leaflet: “Comrades! This is the latest news from Voice of America. We are celebrating May 1, drinking and having fun, while 1000 Russian people have not even a piece of bread. Look at the railway stations: how many unfortunates released from prison are dying of hunger because no one will employ them? And how many are dying in the camps from unbearable labor and hardship? Many times have they risen in revolt, and each time they are shot in a country that calls itself Humane. Can it be? Did you know that during construction on the Amur River 10,000 young men and women perished? At the same time as the Communist rulers are screaming of peace and banning the atom, they are producing atomic and hydrogen bombs. For example, Ashkhabad was destroyed by an atomic explosion. Hydrogen Factory #503/1 is located in Norilsk. Down with Communism, the plague of the nation! Long live true democracy! [Signed] BOAK agent Sinishkin.” (GARF, f. R-8131, op. 31, d. 67339, ll. 17–18).

⁵² See above, the cases of I.R. Petrokas and V.D. Naletaev.

added letters in defense of foreign radio addressed to Soviet officials. S. F. Levin, who was sentenced in 1957 for spreading leaflets, wrote: “We Soviet patriots demand the destruction of the shameful barbaric system of jamming foreign radio stations. This Iron Curtain of the airwaves was created by bloody Stalin, who feared truth more than anything...”⁵³ In one case, the desire to listen to foreign broadcasts and defend foreign radio stations inspired the creation of an underground organization and activities of a terrorist nature. In 1963–1964, a criminal case was brought against S.N. Khanzhnikov and others who were accused of attempting to blow up a jamming station in Minsk.⁵⁴

Some Russian researchers have noted that “only a few underground organizations took up” the idea of Western democracy directly from foreign radio broadcasting.⁵⁵ While this may be true, the origin of many social and political ideas circulating in Soviet society before and after the 1950s remains insufficiently studied. The conclusion of these Russian historians that “the broadcasts of foreign radio stations such as Voice of America, BBC, Radio Liberty, and Radio Free Europe were popular as uncensored sources of information, but not as a generator of ideas”⁵⁶ appears to be premature. What we can accept is their assertion that listening to “foreign voices” was a widespread phenomenon through all layers of society in the USSR.⁵⁷ In the second half of the 1950s foreign radio listening became a stable base of information for Soviet society,⁵⁸ not only supplementing the official version, but as functioning as an alternative to it.

The Authorities’ Attempts at Damage Control

After the suppression of the Hungarian revolution in 1956, the authorities plainly realized the political danger of this popular source of alternative information. Threats “to rebel as they did in Hungary”⁵⁹ were constantly

⁵³ GARF, f. R-8131, op. 31, d. 79588, l. 31.

⁵⁴ GARF, f. R-8131, op. 31, d. 95626.

⁵⁵ Kozlov, Mironenko, Edelman, op.cit., 130.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ The Soviet population found out about many events from this source, allowing individuals to participate in some of the activities that the “foreign voices” spoke of, such as poetry readings in Moscow’s Mayakovsky Square.

⁵⁹ Kozlov, Mironenko, Edelman, op.cit., 50ff.

being expressed verbally, in leaflets, in anonymous letters, in notes on voting ballots. It even inspired the formation of illegal groups. In 1957–1958, the Kremlin not only intensified its own repressive activities,⁶⁰ but also spent time and effort analyzing who was opposed to the regime and why. In this political context, the report of L.F. Ilychev mentioned earlier⁶¹ may also be viewed as an attempt to measure the scale of the damage inflicted by foreign radio broadcasting. In order to prepare countermeasures against “the alien ideological influence,”⁶² a more detailed analysis of the work of USIA was undertaken, as described in January 1958 in a top secret document prepared by the Chairman of the Committee on Cultural Ties with Foreign Countries (GKKS) Yuri Zhukov.⁶³ Viewing with skepticism the prospects of further development in the area of jamming foreign radio broadcasts,⁶⁴ Zhukov, who saw his main goal as publiciz-

⁶⁰ Closed letter of the Central Committee dated December 19, 1956 entitled “On the strengthening of the political work of Party organizations among the masses and halting the appearance of anti-Soviet enemy elements.” New research shows that “having reached its lowest levels in 1956, prosecution for counter-revolutionary crimes rose dramatically in 1957 to 2,498 cases.” (Kozlov, Mironenko, Edelman, op.cit., 50.)

⁶¹ RGANI, f. 89, per. 46, d. 14, ll. 1–2.

⁶² See, for instance, “Spravka o vnutrennem i zarubezhnom radioveshchanii SshA, 22 March 1954, GARF, f. R-86903, op. 3, d. 98, ll. 2–5.

⁶³ *Vlast'* #20 (422), May 22, 2001.

⁶⁴ “In accordance with approved plans in conjunction with the resolution of the Council of Ministers dated 23 August 1954, relating to the jamming of foreign stations, we must establish over 800 transmitters, and of these, 100 must be particularly powerful. Altogether we must have 1000 transmitters working on jamming. It should be noted that the active use of these technical means will also interfere with the reception of Soviet broadcasts. It should also be noted that jamming in and of itself is not particularly effective. Though enormous sums are spent on it (the construction of the jamming sites mentioned in the resolution of 23 August 1954 will cost over 1 billion rubles), it will not and in practice cannot secure complete jamming across the entire territory of the USSR. A report of the Ministry of Communications attached to the resolution of 23 August indicates that complete jamming of enemy broadcasting—should all 800 transmitters be constructed—will be achieved only in 64 of the largest cities of the USSR. Almost the entire remaining part of the country will be open to anti-Soviet broadcasting as before. [...] But even in the 64 cities mentioned, complete jamming will be possible only if our enemies do not add any of their own transmitters to broadcast into the USSR, which is improbable. It would be more certain to assume that in response to our construction of jamming sites the enemy will add new and more powerful transmitters for anti-Soviet broadcasting. In this manner, the reception of foreign radio stations

ing Soviet achievements abroad, came out in favor of partial cessation of jamming.⁶⁵ In terms of improving counterpropaganda, he was able to offer only the option of copying the USIA system of leadership and planning, and continuing to collect information on the effectiveness of Soviet propaganda in various countries. Zhukov encouraged the Central Committee to entrust the Foreign Ministry and his own GKKS with “negotiations with the USA and England on the normalization of relations in the realm of radio broadcasting.”⁶⁶ In September 1959, the partial cessation of jamming began, but not one of Zhukov’s recommendations was ever fully implemented. Zhukov’s grave warning to the Central Committee included a quotation from former Assistant US Secretary of State William Benton before the US Congress: “To reach the minds of Russians is more important for us than landing on the Moon.”⁶⁷ However, his words failed to inspire action from his colleagues.

In later periods, outside the time period covered in this paper, the jamming network grew larger,⁶⁸ and opposition to Western radio broadcasting continued to assume a central place in the minds of the leaders of the Party and state structure.⁶⁹ Through multiple informational channels, the West reached the minds of Russians just as it had reached the Moon. In the 1950s and 1960s no one, either in West or East, was able to foresee the result.

on the territory of the USSR will be just as available as before. The only difference will be that there will be fewer frequencies than now on which reception will be possible.”

⁶⁵ “Cessation of jamming of anti-Soviet broadcasts would give us the possibility of increasing our own foreign broadcasting by about 4070 kilowatts, or 30%. [...] We consider it enough to retain jamming in the largest centers alone, directing it primarily against the stations [Radio] Liberty, Kavkaz, Baikal and similar ones, which are most concerned with inciting subversive activity on the territory of the USSR. All the newly released radio power should be directed at active broadcasting to combat bourgeois radio propaganda.”

⁶⁶ “Po voprosu o vliianii zabivki antisovetskikh radioperedach na peredachi sovetskogo radio, napravlennye za granitsu,” *Vlast'*, #20 (422), May 22, 2001.

⁶⁷ *Vlast'*, #20 (422), May 22, 2001.

⁶⁸ Plejkis, *Radiotsenzura*, op. cit.

⁶⁹ See, for instance, *Prezidium TsK KPSS, 1954-1964: chernovye protokoly zapisi zasedanii, stenogrammy, postanovleniia*, volume 1 (Moscow: Rosspen, 2003–2004), 702.

CHAPTER 15

Foreign Media, the Soviet Western Frontier, and the Hungarian and Czechoslovak Crises¹

AMIR WEINER

Evaluating the impact of foreign broadcasts and publications is a tricky pursuit for those who seek to influence the course of events in an opponent's country, and the impact of Cold War broadcasts to the Soviet Union is not always easy to measure. This essay discusses Soviet responses to the war of the airwaves with the West, and to lesser-known yet equally important East European media, in the context of the changes that took place during the two decades that followed Stalin's death.

The bulk of data referenced in this article are drawn from reports by the KGB and Communist Party organizations, now stored in former Soviet archives in the Russian Federation, Ukraine and the Baltic States, as well as from "Target Area Listener Reports" compiled by RFE/RL audience research, which are now in the Hoover Archives at Stanford University. Both Soviet and Western reports tried to assess the scope of popular reactions to foreign broadcasts on the basis of numerous individual cases. It should be noted that these did not constitute a public opinion survey. The Soviet accounts were mostly police reports aimed at identifying individual troublemakers, which occasionally addressed the issue of the popular appeal of Western broadcasts in terms of content. The Western reports were compilations of conversations with Soviet citizens traveling abroad, a fairly privileged stratum of Soviet society. The focus here is on Soviet official and popular reactions to foreign media reports and broadcasts in a specific place at specific times: namely, the Western frontier at the time of the 1956 Hungarian uprising and the 1968 Czechoslovak crisis.

The Western frontier is the area stretching between the Baltic and Black Seas that was annexed by the Soviets in 1939–40. Populated main-

¹ Thanks to Simo Mikkonen of the University of Jyväskylä in Finland for his support in writing this chapter.

ly by non-Russians and impregnated with the living memory of national sovereignty, it was an obvious target for Western broadcasts. The volatility of the region was exacerbated by its proximity to, and growing contacts with the Scandinavian countries and Hungary, Poland, and Czechoslovakia (the trouble spots of the Soviet Bloc), as well as the unsolved issues of post-war border demarcation.

The 1956 Polish and Hungarian crises caught up with the Soviets at a moment when cautious attempts to reform the Stalinist system were growing bolder, notably with the release of a significant number of convicted nationalist guerrillas and activists, who were allowed to return to their homes on the Western frontier. The 1968 Czechoslovak crisis unfolded when the Soviet polity appeared to have stabilized its domestic order, including the ethno-national homogenization of its Western frontier, even though it was facing increasing challenges in the international arena from both allies and rivals. The Soviet handling of the challenges posed by foreign radio broadcasts, during these crises and beyond, touched on critical issues such as the boundaries of reform and the price the regime was willing to pay for relative loss of control over information flow and communications.²

The Twentieth Party Congress, and the ensuing discussions inside and outside the Party cells, reopened the wounds of occupation and Sovietization policies in the area of the Western frontier, and offered anti-Soviet activists a vast pool of viable memories and rhetoric upon which to draw. The amnesty and return of political prisoners provided the required conduit. What was needed was a catalyst that would transform these dormant resentments into action. Such a spark arrived from across the border in Fall 1956.

Early signs that residents of the Western frontier were closely watching the turbulent events in Eastern Europe had been spotted in the immediate aftermath of Khrushchev's speech to the Congress. In Estonia, inquiries about the legality of purges in the Eastern European satellite countries served as a tacit reminder that Soviet power was an external force, and the Estonian Republic was a sovereign state. Significantly, such inqui-

² On the Soviet Western frontier in the post-Stalin decades, see Amir Weiner, "The Empires Pay a Visit: Gulag Returnees, East European Rebellions, and Soviet Frontier Politics," in *The Journal of Modern History* 78:2 (June 2006), and "Déjà Vu All Over Again: Prague Spring, Romanian Summer, and Soviet Autumn on Russia's Western Frontier," in *The Journal of Contemporary European History*, 2006.

ries were emerging from the Party's rank and file. Bearing in mind that thousands of Estonians had been purged, deported or executed, requests to clarify the validity of the cases against the Trotskyite–Bukharinite opposition and prominent Communists such as Traicho Kostov, Rudolf Slánský, and László Rajk were particularly troublesome. Questions thrown at Leonid Lentsmann, Secretary of the Estonian Central Committee, during a meeting with Party members in the town of Kohtla-Järve, linked Party, domestic purges and external brutalities: “Will Trotsky, Zinoviev, and Kamenev be rehabilitated, since they were ideologically harmless?” “Will Stalin be tried posthumously for the murder of many leaders and thousands of innocent workers?” “Many think that Stalin was also involved in the murder of Poles near Smolensk [i.e., the massacre of thousands of Polish officers in the Katyn forest].”³ When Poland and Hungary erupted a few months later, the importance of such inquiries became clear.

The Estonian authorities were even more concerned by the loss of their monopoly over information. Voice of America was cited as the main competitor. This bred a frenzy of rumors, especially in the villages. Particularly alarming was information on popular reactions in other non-Russian republics. Soviet concerns over foreign broadcasts translated into constant jamming and an attempt to compete with Western programs, especially in the non-Russian regions. The issue was of special concern in territorially small Estonia whose entire space was vulnerable to Western broadcasters, as the authorities found out well before the 1956 crises. In early 1953, the Republic's Central Committee ordered intensification of jamming, including a plea for help to the Baltic Fleet; curtailment of the sale of long-range wireless radios, and an increased supply of short-range receivers; and improvement of the quality of the admittedly unattractive local radio programs.⁴

Alluding to the visible gap between official silence in the USSR over Khrushchev's “secret speech” and constant references to it in Western broadcasts, Western Ukrainians wondered out loud why Khrushchev's speech had not been published in the press and circulated among the population at large.⁵ In Estonia, Party members reported rumors about

³ Eesti Riigiarhiivi Filiaali, State Archives of Estonia, (ERAF), 1/211/5/35–36, 43.

⁴ ERAF 1/5/52/1–3, 5.

⁵ Tsentral'nyi derzhavnyi arkhiv hromads'kykh ob'iednan Ukrainy, Central State Archive of Public Organizations of Ukraine (TsDAHOU) 1/24/4373/177.

the alleged dispatch of 15,000 agitators from Moscow to Georgia to answer questions on the Cult of Personality, about an uprising that resulted in the seizure of government facilities, and about the 1937 execution of 5,000 officers associated with the Tukhachevsky affair. While Georgia was rocked by pro-Stalin demonstrations, monuments of the late leader were desecrated throughout Estonia. The authorities were further shaken by inquiries about the validity of Stalin's views on nationality policy and, even worse, about deportations from the USSR: "Was the resettlement of the *kulaks* necessary, and will they be allowed to return?" came one question from the Estonian town of Türi.⁶

Peasants in the Western Ukrainian region of Drohobych wondered what the principal and concrete mistakes were that Stalin committed in guiding the rural economy.⁷ In a region where collectivization was the worst calamity of the Soviet regime, few could be fooled by the seemingly innocent question. With deported kulaks and nationalist activists returning from exile, the wounds this policy had inflicted were reopened.

As if this was not enough, the regime's anxieties were compounded by the impact of foreign broadcasts on its future political and cultural elite, especially Baltic youth. When the Lithuanian Komsomol surveyed the republic's student body during the spring of 1956, it found youngsters who, though not necessarily restless, were alarmingly isolated from Soviet life, existing inside a political-educational system that practically admitted its inability to penetrate their cohorts. (On the lighter side, some students cheered for the Canadian and American teams that competed with the Soviets during the Winter Olympics—though this did not amuse the authorities.) In their conversations with students, Komsomol officials learned that most young people, including activists, did not have a clue about the policies resulting from the Twentieth Party Congress. They were not reading Party material and newspapers, and some could not even name the First Secretary of the Communist Party. To make matters worse, the population was exposed daily to foreign broadcasts in Lithuanian that highlighted the chronic failings of the rural economy and food shortages. With rather unusual frankness, the authors admitted that these broadcasts found a responsive audience since they corresponded to the grim state of the republic's economy. The reporters found it regrettable, though unsurprising,

⁶ ERAF, 1/211/5/44, 47–49.

⁷ TsDAHOU 1/24/4373/168.

that, given the miserable state of political education and the existence of effective foreign propaganda, foreign broadcasts had become the main source of information for many Komsomol members. When tried for anti-Soviet activities, Jonas Germanauskas defended himself saying that he “had been under the influence of people with anti-Soviet views for a long time. [My] father and mother expressed dissatisfaction with Soviet power, often listened to the Voice of America broadcasts, and discussed them in an anti-Soviet spirit... There was often talk about the coming end of Soviet power in Lithuania, and that sooner or later the Americans would liberate us.”

The reporters’ concern over lack of revolutionary spirit was overshadowed by the obvious friction between nationalities in the republic, and the apparent reluctance of local Komsomol organizations to confront it. The memory and legacy of national sovereignty resonated strongly with the student body. Students were prominent among those who continued to mark national holidays, laying wreaths of flowers on graves of fallen “bourgeois” patriots, and singing patriotic songs that called for a free Lithuania. The authors of the report were particularly exasperated by the failure of Komsomol cells in Vilnius and Kaunas to react to the almost complete absence of Soviet music from the repertoire of concerts organized by the students. The songs that made the list were Lithuanian, German, Polish, Italian, and Spanish. Ethnic Russians were often excluded from artistic collectives and choirs since none of the Lithuanian participants was able to converse with them in Russian. As a rule, Lithuanian and Russian students led separate lives inside and outside the dorms.

Against this background, questions posed by students during meetings with a Komsomol brigade that toured the republic assumed additional volatility. The questions included: “What are the basic characteristics of Christian socialism?” or “Why is the course on Lithuanian history cut short in middle and higher educational institutions? Could this be taken for nationalism? Why is there an attempt to deny the significance of the Lithuanian princes Gediminas and Vytautas? Is it because they were feudal? But Dolgorukii was also feudal and his monument is erected in Moscow. Why is there no monument to the founder of Vilnius in our capital?” A hint of still-burning irredentist aspirations surfaced in questions such as: “Nearly 5,000 Lithuanians live in Gerviat in the Soviet Belarusian republic, but they cannot study in their native language. There is not a single Lithuanian school there. Doesn’t this constitute a distinctive na-

tionalist tendency?”⁸ With irredentist claims resurfacing throughout the socialist bloc, foreign broadcasts had a captive audience on the Soviet Western frontier.

When the Hungarian crisis got underway, access to information became a key issue. The Soviet government was accused of distrusting its own population and concealing information on the course of events, thus helping the spread of provocative rumors. But people seemed to be well informed. Many gathered information from the broadcasts of the BBC, the Hungarian news agency, Polish newspapers that continued to sell freely in Western Ukraine during and after the crisis,⁹ and from relatives and friends who went back and forth across the border. The loss of the monopoly of information contributed to the rapid destabilization of the region as national minorities began to draw their own conclusions about the upheaval across the border.¹⁰ For the Poles of Western Ukraine, it was mainly the living memory of statehood that fueled their interest in events in their external homeland. “The Poles were always distinguished by their great desire for freedom and independence,” a senior instructor in one of Lviv’s economic institutions told his colleagues. “During their thirty years of independence they became accustomed to a different way of life.” Someone else summed up the situation as the simple desire of her brethren to escape from Russian control. The expectation was that a chain reaction would shake the Soviet satellite countries and spill over to the Western frontier. Poles in the region repeatedly invoked the name of Tito, the Yugoslav leader who, in their view, had inspired the Polish and Hungarian governments to follow his path in relations with the Soviet

⁸ Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsialno-politicheskoi istorii, Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History, (RGASPI) M-1/46/192/6–8, 10, 19–20, 179.

⁹ By late November 1956, some 1,000 copies of leading Polish newspapers were circulating in Lviv alone, providing readers with information on the Yugoslav government’s reaction to the abduction of Imre Nagy to Romania, Nehru’s statement on the “crisis of Communism,” critical essays on socialist realism and the “Zhdanovshchina” in literature, and reports on the Polish government’s consent to American aid. See *Kulturne zhyttia v Ukraïni*, 2:220, 274.

¹⁰ The authorities in Lviv noted that the events in Hungary and Poland, combined with information from foreign radio broadcasts and socialist bloc media, had reignited debates over the sensitive issues of nationality policy, collectivization, and the sources of the Soviet victory in World War II, and had soured relations between Ukrainian and Russian students. See *Kulturne zhyttia v Ukraïni*, 2:274–75.

Union. As the Soviets were fully aware of that, the living memory of lost sovereignty was even more problematic in the Baltic republics.

Consternation among the nearly 50,000-strong Hungarian minority in the Transcarpathian region was widespread as the Hungarian crisis unfolded. When events reached their deadly climax, the agitation in the region turned vehement and public. In late October, the streets of the regional center of Uzhhorod were plastered with anti-Soviet and anti-Semitic leaflets. Locals insulted Soviet soldiers and non-Hungarians in public. "You just wait. Soon you'll kneel down before me," came one threat. Another worker promised a group of non-Hungarians that they would all "go to church and kneel down in prayer when the Soviets leave the Transcarpathian region that will be reunited with Hungary." Referring to the uprising as a "revolution"—a provocative term in the eyes of the Soviet authorities—some viewed it as the long awaited indigenization of power in their homeland. "The Hungarian people got rid of the former Jewish Prime Minister and replaced him with one of their own, a Magyar," gloated an employee at the municipal housing administration. Others, who crossed the border for family visits, assured their relatives that "In two months there won't be collective farms [in Hungary] any more. The Russians will run away as the Germans did in 1944... All of us immigrants have been at work, but here nobody does anything because you are afraid of getting twenty-five years [in prison]... We'll continue to work for the return of Transcarpathia and other lands to Hungary. Greater Hungary will soon be restored to its 1914 borders... If there is a third world war, we won't lose territory any more because America and West Germany are stronger than ever."¹¹

By late October 1956, the Estonian authorities were growing increasingly alarmed by the impact of the upheavals in Poland and Hungary, and the avalanche of broadcasts from the Voice of America. On October 27 alone, a series of apparently coordinated gatherings took place in several restaurants in Tallinn. Dozens of former graduates of the Swedish and British colleges of inter-war Tallinn, recently released anti-Soviet activists, and wartime collaborators with the Germans saluted the Polish and Hungarian uprisings. The participants raised a toast to "Free Hungary" and sang the Polish national anthem, "Poland has not Yet Perished."

Teenagers, too, appeared vulnerable to Western broadcasts. A group of schoolchildren circulated anti-Soviet leaflets and named themselves

¹¹ TsDAHOU, 1/24/4265/9.

the “Union of the Spartacists.” Jüri Kreis, the teenager who initiated this activity, claimed he was inspired by the broadcasts of the Voice of America on the events in Hungary.¹²

In the aftermath of the Hungarian crisis, the Lithuanian KGB investigated another source of unrest: the growing volume of correspondence between Lithuania and the outside world. About 140,000 Soviet Lithuanians kept in touch with the outside world through letters. Between January 1956 and April 1957 some 720,000 letters reached Lithuania, mainly from the United States, Argentina, Brazil, West Germany, and Israel. The KGB confiscated 6,238 of these letters because of their alleged anti-Soviet character. The agency claimed that, before the Hungarian crisis, it only confiscated a handful of anti-Soviet letters. Following the October–November events, the influx of nationalist anti-Soviet correspondence increased radically. Many of these letters directed the correspondents to anti-Soviet radio broadcasts. The result, argued the KGB, was a sharp increase in the public display of anti-Soviet conduct, especially by youth and intelligentsia.¹³

On 19 December 1956, the Presidium of the Central Committee in Moscow weighed in with an extremely harsh and impatient letter addressed to all Party organizations down to the level of primary cells, entitled “On Strengthening Political Work of the Party Organizations Among the Masses and Preventing Attacks by Anti-Soviet, Hostile Elements.” Tying the recent events in Hungary to the influence of broadcasts by the Voice of America, BBC, and Radio Free Europe, the Presidium lashed out at Party organizations that had lost their vigilance and at “weaklings” in the creative intelligentsia, academia, and the media. The Estonian student body was criticized for nationalist demeanor, admiration for the “counterrevolution” in Hungary, proposals for liquidation of the *Komsomol*, and distribution of anti-Soviet leaflets. The letter concluded with a stern warning: “The Central Committee emphasizes with special force that we cannot have two opinions about how to struggle with hostile elements. The dictatorship of the proletariat must be merciless with anti-Soviet elements. Communists in the organs of the prosecutor’s office, the courts, and state security must keep a sharp eye on the interests of our so-

¹² ERAF 1/211/5/108–111, 113–14.

¹³ Lietuvos visuomenės organizacijų archyvas (LVOA) 1771/190/11/26–27. For one such letter by a student in Vilnius describing to his father in the United States the All Souls Day demonstration, see “Lituanus” 7 (1960) 2: 65.

cialist state. They must be vigilant in searching for hostile elements and, in accordance with the laws of Soviet power, must put an end to criminal actions in a timely manner.”¹⁴

The Baltic Party and state organizations were in a state of despair. Short on manpower and struggling to conceal the sympathies of many of its rank and file, the Estonian Communist Party seemed overwhelmed by the course of events. The erosion of control over information was on top of the agenda when the primary Party organizations convened in mid-January to discuss the Presidium’s letter. In some localities, such as the Antsla district, the Voice of America, broadcasting in Estonian and with better reception than the Tallinn-based station, was the major source of news.¹⁵ Communists, too, displayed negative habits. Instead of setting the appropriate example, Party members often tuned in to foreign broadcasts in the company of fellow citizens, and went so far as to declare in Party meetings that the rural economy in bourgeois Estonia was more developed than the present collective farm system, that the current system was inadequate for Estonia, and that one should remember that Estonia was the eternal homeland of the Estonians. None other than the deputy chairman of the Tartu *raispolkom* stated that “our propaganda is too imposing. We cannot thrust our ideology on everyone. We have too many Red slogans... Of course, every Party member must recognize the statutes of the Communist Party and subject himself to the majority, but what’s going on within his soul is another matter, and here no one can impose anything.”¹⁶ Quite probably, this was the audience that the broadcasters valued most.

Interestingly, though not surprisingly, Soviet reactions to foreign broadcasts after the Hungarian and Polish crises of 1956 reflected the new course set by Nikita Khrushchev, now alone at the helm. The cocky self-assuredness of the Soviet leader was informed by his utopian vision of “Communism in our lifetime,” and the accompanying relaxation of relations with the West. With the further Sovietization of the neighboring countries, the ideological justification for annexations as a progressive liberation from imperialist oppression became obsolete. Having claimed that borders cannot breed conflict among socialist countries, since “for us Communists [this] is not a principal issue,” Khrushchev went on to

¹⁴ Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv noveishei istorii, Russian State Archive of Contemporary History, (RGANI) 89/6/2/1–12, esp.8, 10–11.

¹⁵ ERAF 1/211/6/21.

¹⁶ ERAF 1/211/6/18, 21–22.

prophesize in early March 1959 that, with the world-wide victory of Communism, state and even ethnographical boundaries would become irrelevant. They would merely serve to “[record] the historically evolved fact that this or that nationality inhabits a given territory.”¹⁷ Barely three years after the Hungarian uprising, the ethno-national shockwaves these remarks sent throughout the region were lost among the vision—or delusions—of “Communism around the corner.” But the international arena was inhospitable to Utopian claims. Unwittingly, the Soviet leader had opened the door for nitty-gritty inquiries about the reasons preventing the unification of ethnic minorities such as the Soviet Moldovans with their ethnic brethren in socialist Romania. In an ironic twist, the successful spread of the socialist system across the border deprived the Soviets of viable ideological tools and the dynamic role of an external homeland, while at the same time resuscitating entrenched historical claims.

Success, however, had a price tag, and no one was more aware of it than the KGB. Relating the lessons of the era to its young apprentices some ten years later, the agency’s directors sounded almost nostalgic for an earlier, simpler age, when borders were controllable, the enemy was recognizable, and its tactics and ideology were straightforward. During the 1960s, they lamented, foreign broadcast stations had emerged as primary transmitters of hostile information into the Western frontier, legal means had been employed to subvert Soviet order by non-Russian nationalist groups, and the international crises of the 1960s had been used in combination with sophisticated propaganda to activate and expand the targeted constituencies of the broadcasters. Paraphrasing, perhaps not unwittingly, Stalin’s famous characterization of the elusive new enemy that confronted Soviet power after the building of socialism, KGB historians quoted an unnamed Ukrainian nationalist leader who allegedly claimed that the era of armed struggle had ended, and the era of subverting Soviet power from within had begun.¹⁸ The Soviet polity had entered a new era, with new challenges.

¹⁷ Cited in Robert King’s insightful discussion, *Minorities under Communism: Nationalities as a Source of Tension among Balkan Communist States* (Cambridge, MA, 1973), 99–101.

¹⁸ Viktor Chebrikov et al, eds. *Istoriia Sovetskikh organov gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti* (Moscow, 1977), 544–45. I thank David Rich for providing me with a copy of this KGB internal textbook prepared for the training of the agency’s officers.

And so, in March and September 1959, the Kremlin moved from indiscriminate jamming (*sploshnoe zaglushenie*) to a more selective interference with the broadcasts of the Voice of America and the BBC. According to the Agitation and Propaganda Department of the Central Committee in Moscow, in mid-July of 1960, Western stations broadcast for 50 hours a day, 40 of which were in the Russian language. The leading broadcaster, Voice of America, broadcast 16 1/2 hours daily, of which 8 hours were in Russian, 2 hours in Ukrainian, 1 1/2 hours each in Lithuanian, Latvian, and Estonian, and 1 hour each in Armenian and Georgian. The BBC had cut its daily broadcasts to 2 hours. Soviet jamming of “anti-Soviet, slanderous material,” continued, but varied according to the alleged content of the program. Anti-Soviet material was alleged to be present in only 3% to 5% of broadcasts at the beginning of the year, rising to 75% to 95% in May, and then declining to an average of 40% to 60% of Voice of America programs by the end of 1959. The authorities distinguished between the more aggressive content of the American broadcasts and the mellower tone of the British. The latter, noted the Agitprop Department, were somewhat less slanderous and, following the end of indiscriminate jamming, reduced their broadcasts in the non-Russian languages. In contrast, the American broadcasts constantly hammered home the superiority of the American way of life and the principles of freedom and prosperity in the capitalist system. The tone of the American broadcasts, observed the report-writers, tended to be superficially well-disposed, even ingratiating.

The Agitprop Department conceded several key vulnerabilities in fighting Western radio broadcasts. Although it was difficult to estimate the number of listeners, it noted that there were some 20 million radios capable of receiving foreign radio broadcasts. Indirect evidence showed that they were used not only in apartments, but also in public places, such as the teahouses in Tajikistan. War invalids who possessed technical expertise were singled out as one of the groups likely to follow foreign broadcasts in republics where reception of Soviet radio was weak. The report admitted that Soviet citizens in Uzbekistan, Lviv, Odessa, Tomsk and several other regions regularly followed the Voice of America and the BBC. Letters to the Central Committee and the State radio committee, as well as questions sent to propagandists, revealed a population informed by Western broadcasts. It was noted that one of the roles of Western broadcasts was to fill in the gaps in Soviet broadcasting. In the hyper-centralized Soviet system, listeners throughout the Union heard a single

news broadcast originating from Moscow, which meant that residents of the Far East region received the popular 19:00 “Latest News” only at 01:00 local time. In contrast, the Voice of America was received at 22:00 in the Far East. Similar problems beset the populations of the Urals, Siberia and other Eastern regions. In certain regions, the Voice of America timed its Russian-language evening news broadcasts to air half-an-hour before the Soviet “Latest News,” beating the latter to the punch. Finally, it was admitted that the American style of brief, fast reporting and commentary, however tendentious, presented a difficult challenge in the battle over listeners.

As was often the case, the Soviet countermeasures addressed the form rather than content of the problem. The Agitprop Department ordered an immediate change in the broadcast time of Soviet popular programs so that they would overlap with foreign programs. In its January 1961 review of the implementation of its own decree on countering hostile broadcasts, the Department noted with satisfaction that, even in Estonia, foreign broadcasts were effectively countered by popular political programs, a rather curious comment given the evident popularity of the former in this republic. The Department had also established an ongoing verification over counter-propaganda broadcasts, and not surprisingly, the Lithuanian republic was the first in line. Aside from a general comment on the need to raise the level of Soviet programs, the content of the broadcasts was not on the table.¹⁹

Thus, the 1960s saw large segments of the borderland populations tuning out of the Soviet airwaves and in to Western broadcasts. The Estonian Central Committee estimated in 1966 that, at certain hours, up to 70% of the population were tuning in to foreign (mainly Finnish) broadcasts, while a 1967 survey at the University of Vilnius revealed that more than one-third of the students were following foreign broadcasts.²⁰ “In Tallinn,” one interviewee told Radio Liberty, “one sees special antennas facing Helsinki on nearly every roof.” Indeed, Finnish TV became a regular item on the cultural menu of ordinary Estonians—along with Swedish TV for Latvians.²¹ Along the way, Soviet citizens developed dif-

¹⁹ RGANI 89/37/31/36–40, 58–59. See, also Maury Lisann, *Broadcasting to the Soviet Union: International Politics and Radio* (New York, 1975), 14.

²⁰ Kristine Joy Roth-Ey, *Mass Media and the Remaking of Soviet Culture, 1950s–1960s*, PhD Dissertation (Princeton University, 2003), 254, 260 n.37.

²¹ Hoover Institution Archives, RFE/RL, Inc. Corporate Records. Box 564, file 1. “Target Area Listener Report (TALR) #84–61.” 16 August 1961; file 7,

ferent tastes, some opting for Radio Liberty, and some for the BBC. The impact of the broadcasts varied to a large degree based on personal taste and command of languages, with Radio Liberty often lagging behind because of its Russian-language broadcasts to areas where Russian was in poor command.²² A university-educated journalist from Tallinn and a factory employee from Riga were both surprised to learn that Khrushchev had actually been ousted. They said they had believed the official version of resignation due to old age, until they heard the news on Radio Liberty and read accounts in English-language newspapers. Residents of the Chernivtsi region in Western Ukraine said they first learned of Khrushchev's visits abroad, the "shoe incident" at the UN and the construction of the Berlin Wall from Radio Liberty and the Voice of America.²³

As if this was not enough, early in the decade, the Romanians began operating a powerful radio transmitter in Iași, the capital of historical Moldova, located just a few miles from the Soviet Republic of Moldavia, broadcasting primarily programs about Romanian culture, history and literature, and reminding Soviet Romanians that they were not forgotten.²⁴ Even Party-minded individuals who denounced the broadcasts admitted to following them and were able to offer a detailed review of their content. In meetings where Party and KGB officials were present, Komsomol leaders in University Party cells openly talked about following Western broadcasts, which they considered superior to the Soviet broadcasts.²⁵ Others tuned in for the music, such as a jazz-loving Lithuanian technician from Kaunas who enjoyed good reception of Radio Liberty, but preferred Polish stations and the Voice of America because of their jazz music shows.²⁶ In the more religious Western Ukraine, especially in places that lacked churches, Western religious broadcasts became a key medium

#69–65. 2 September 1965; file 8, #22–66. 25 March 1966; file 8, #31–66. 6 May 1966.

²² RFE/RL, Inc. Corporate Records. Box 564, file 9, "TALR #7–67." 3 January 1967.

²³ RFE/RL, Inc. Corporate Records. Box 564, file 6, "TALR #94–64." 4 November 1964 and #110–64. 8 December 1964; file 2, #27–62. 9 May 1962.

²⁴ Nicholas Dima, *From Moldavia to Moldova: The Soviet–Romanian Territorial Dispute* (Boulder, 1991), 48, 50; King, *Minorities under Communism*, op.cit., 226–27.

²⁵ RFE/RL, Inc. Corporate Records. Box 564, file 3. "TALR #78–62." 30 August 1962; file 8, #126–66, 4 October 1966; file 8, #152a–66. 29 January 1967.

²⁶ RFE/RL, Inc. Corporate Records. Box 564, file 2. "TALR #43–62." 18 July 1962.

for religious life. Radio Liberty's Sunday services were closely followed, as well as Radio Vatican, BBC and the Voice of America.²⁷ Finally, following foreign broadcasts assumed the characteristics of an intimate cult, with listeners from Ulan-Ude in the Buryat Republic, who were exposed to Radio Liberty and Japanese broadcasts, introducing the stations to their relatives in the Baltic countryside, reveling in the thrill of the forbidden and nicknaming frequent listeners "liberators."²⁸

Hence, it came as no surprise that the thorny issue of foreign broadcasts should have resurfaced on the Western frontier when the situation in Czechoslovakia approached its climax in 1968. This was the second of what would become twelve-year cycles of crisis across the rocky Soviet empire. The brutal suppression of the Hungarian uprising, and the ensuing exile and population exchange movements in the borderlands in 1956–57, had made it clear that the Soviet authorities would not tolerate opposition in their midst, especially in the critically exposed Western republics of the USSR. But during the same period, the polity had witnessed the birth and institutionalization of the dissident movement. Pressures for further homogenization of national cultures coincided with growing assertiveness in the struggle to maintain indigenous traditions. Memories of the great cataclysm of World War II ran along a political, ideological and ethnic divide. The decade preceding 1968 saw the frontier reclaiming its age-old status as a window to the West, as millions of tourists crossed the borders to and from Western Europe, Scandinavia and the Eastern Bloc, local populations tuned into foreign radio and television broadcasts, and adventurous youth created sub-cultures in the urban centers. Although exhausted by the bloodletting of the not-so-distant war and the process of Sovietization, the Soviet borderlands were unsettled by their exposure to relative prosperity across the frontier. This was one of the price tags of de-Stalinization. To some extent, it was the inevitable result of the expanding economic and political horizons of the Soviet polity. The region posed a constant threat to a regime sworn to uphold an infallible ideology and to preserve a monopoly over the formulation and dissemination of information. Despite attempts to reduce ethno-national tensions, both place and populace

²⁷ RFE/RL, Inc. Corporate Records. Box 564, file 7. "TALR #92–65." 19 October 1965; file 8, #7–66. 8 February 1966; file 8, #115–66. 20 September 1966.

²⁸ RFE/RL, Inc. Corporate Records. Box 564, file 9, "TALR #7–67." 3 January 1967; file 3, #101–26." 25 October 1962.

remained vulnerable to irredentist claims by their socialist neighbors. Time and circumstances transformed the peoples of the Western frontier from passive observers into active participants in international politics. All the conflicts and contradictions came to the fore in 1968, when the region encountered the shock waves of the unfolding crisis in neighboring Czechoslovakia.

The nearly uninterrupted flow of information from Czechoslovakia to the Western republics of the USSR resulted in unprecedented exposure of Soviet citizens to Western information. The radicalizing impact of the drama unfolding across the border could not be ignored, at least not by the cagey Soviet leadership. Early that year, during a meeting in Moscow, an evidently agitated Leonid Brezhnev raised the issue of destabilizing rhetoric with the Czechoslovak leadership: "Comrades, you know about the CPSU's principled position based on full respect for the independence of all fraternal parties and countries. But not every question is a purely internal matter... After all, your newspapers are read also by Soviet citizens and your radio broadcasts attract listeners in our country as well, which means that all this propaganda affects us just as much as it does you."²⁹ Meanwhile, Yuri Ilnitsky, the First Secretary of the Transcarpathian Regional Party Committee, who was in constant contact with his East Slovakian counterparts across the border, repeatedly expressed his uneasiness with the Ukrainian newspaper *Nove Zhyttia*, published in Prešov, which featured unacceptable nationalist opinions.³⁰ On May 12, 1968, on Petro Shelest's orders, Ilnitsky forwarded to the Central Committee in Moscow a report on "Certain Items Featured in Czechoslovak Television Broadcasts and in the newspaper *Rudé Právo*." The report alleged that, with the recent end to jamming of foreign radio broadcasts, and the removal of genuine inspections at the border check-points, Czechoslovakia had willingly turned itself into a transmission point for "spies, anti-socialist and anti-Soviet literature, and all kind of religious objects." Every day, 50,000–55,000 tourists, mainly from West Germany and Austria, entered Czechoslovakia. As a Czechoslovak television report showed, border guards did not even try to check their belongings. "To cross the border, all a tourist has to do is to stick his head out of the bus's window and show a paper to the bor-

²⁹ Mark Kramer, "The Czechoslovak Crisis and the Brezhnev Doctrine," in Carole Fink et al, eds. *1968: The World Transformed* (New York, 1998), 143.

³⁰ TsDAHOU 1/25/27/23–24.

der guard, who then smiles happily at him and wishes him a good time in Prague... Other reports showed border guards removing barbed wire from the [obsolete] border installations,” reported the evidently stunned Ilnitsky. The television broadcasts of the May 1 festivities featured demonstrators displaying slogans demanding an opposition party, and speakers calling for an end to the dictatorship of the Communist Party and the formation of a new polity modeled after the English and American two-party system. Ilnitsky singled out two other topics of direct relevance to Western Ukraine. First, the Czechoslovak media had reported extensively on the revival of the Greek Catholic Church in Eastern Slovakia. This was guaranteed to provoke the Soviets. The Greek Catholic Church had been the spiritual core of the Ukrainian nationalist movement, and had been suppressed simultaneously in postwar Czechoslovakia and Soviet Ukraine. The official endorsement of its revival was anathema to the Soviet authorities, who had kept intact the ban on the Church in Ukraine. Second, the print media had directly challenged the socialist socio-economic order in their handling of Soviet–Czechoslovak relations. A recent article in *Rudé Právo*, wrote the Transcarpathian Secretary, claimed that the years of the Cult of Personality [referring to the Novotný era] had “witnessed an unreasonable transfer of the Soviet experience, which meant that along with the positive aspects, we imported things unsuitable for our country, not to mention outdated and egregiously unscientific concepts, such as the creation of a Lysenko school.” This not-so-tacit reference to the collective farm system was especially explosive in Western Ukraine, where collectivization embodied all the ills of Soviet power. The same article celebrated the close ties forged between Czechoslovak and Soviet students, “who themselves today are seeking new paths to follow, do not like the phrases muttered by agitators, and are more critical than the previous generation”—an observation that could only unnerve the already agitated Soviet regime.³¹ Thanks to the Czechoslovak media, Western Ukrainians, one of the most rebellious Soviet constituencies, could now watch, read and draw their own conclusions on issues that were still strictly taboo in their country.

With the relatively free flow of information across the border, Soviet citizens from all walks of life were busily recording and transmitting news and rumors about delicate issues, including in the strategically sensitive Transcarpathia. Mikhail Magyar, a thirty-three-year-old teacher

³¹ TsDAHOU 1/25/29/7–12.

from Khust who returned from a visit to Czechoslovakia was recorded as telling his brother:

During my stay in the Sudetenland, I was struck to see that almost all the prisoners have been released from jails, and they are now publishing articles of a vehement anti-Soviet character in various newspapers, and demanding friendship and cooperation with the Federal Republic of Germany. They write and tell their friends about the alleged torments, humiliations, and insults they suffered.³²

A few months later, Soviet anxieties grew exponentially. Reporting on the “Sentiments among the Clergy Regarding the Czechoslovak Events,” the head of the Council on Religious Affairs of the Soviet Council of Ministers noted the sharp increase in the “illegal nationalist activities of priests, monks, and fanatical worshipers of the former Greek Catholic Church.” Influenced by events across the border in Czechoslovakia, and by foreign radio broadcasts, Greek Catholic believers were coming out in favor of an independent Ukraine, and against the Russification of Ukrainians under the tutelage of the Russian Orthodox Church. Priests from the Transcarpathian region “excelled,” wrote the official, when they sent a letter to the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet declaring that they would not cease their efforts to bring about the restoration of the Greek Catholic Church.³³ His anxiety is understandable. In the villages of the Drohobych region, priests had launched a door-to-door revival campaign, urging believers to follow the Czechoslovak example and restore the Church through their own efforts. One of them opined that, “an uprising is taking place in Czechoslovakia. Soon the same will happen here.” After the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, other Greek Catholic activists stated that, “It was a crude violation of sovereignty. I have never believed the Soviet peace-loving propaganda. Obviously we are heading for repression here as well.” And, in an alarming threat to social order, Greek Catholic priests began preaching against the priests of the Orthodox Church who had taken up their positions following the forced merger in 1946.³⁴ Given the history of the Church, and the fact that many of the

³² TsDAHOU 1/25/28/157.

³³ RGANI 5/60/24/150–56. I thank Mark Kramer for forwarding me this document.

³⁴ TsDAHOU 1/25/33/86–87.

Greek Catholic priests in question had been previously incarcerated for nationalist activity, it is likely that this was one of the displays of discontent that troubled the Soviet authorities most.

The August 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia put paid to several developments on the Western frontier that had been partially influenced by Western broadcasts, such as reform expectations from within and irredentist pressure from without. But foreign broadcasts, especially from Scandinavia, continued to haunt the authorities. In 1974, when the Estonian leader and the Estonian Chairman of the State Committee for Television and Radio submitted a report to the Central Committee in Moscow, this was nothing new. By then, a powerful new TV station in Helsinki had already saturated the airwaves of the northern parts of Estonia with anti-Soviet news reports from the West, films that celebrated the Western lifestyle, and unsettling doses of violence and sex. The authors admitted that a significant portion of the Estonian population was tuning in. The solution they advocated to counter the impact of the Finnish broadcasts offers an insight into a world that was both cynical and increasingly detached from reality. In addition to improving reception of central and Estonian television broadcasts, the Estonian officials advised the screening of Soviet and foreign films; the improvement of color broadcasts; intensified propaganda on the Soviet way of life; and instructing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to convey Soviet concern over unfriendly broadcasts to the Finns.³⁵ Given the visible public thirst for information, the poverty of Soviet broadcasts, and the changes that had taken place in the republic in the course of the previous two decades, one wonders whether the Estonian officials had a different place and time in mind. But in the final analysis, they were not far off the mark. Soviet power in the Western frontier areas had come to rest on routine, consumerism, and the tacit understanding that, when it came to any meaningful change in the system, it was Moscow, not the local authorities, that would call the shots.

Understanding Soviet official and popular views of foreign media and their impact entails first and foremost a thorough analysis of the Soviets' own perception of the strength of domestic order, especially in vulnerable regions such as the Western frontier. The regime's attempts to evaluate the issue revealed the unsettling fact that its own political and cultural elites were the main consumers of foreign broadcasts. The influence of this on the inner corrosion of the system would become clearer

³⁵ ERAF 1/302/230/1–4.

only decades later. Although Stalin's successors were confident of the system's ability to absorb the shockwaves of de-Stalinization at home, and cope with irredentist pressures from socialist neighbors, the exposure of alienated populations to alternative views occasioned a certain anxiety, and this was translated into a concerted effort to jam foreign radio broadcasts. The influence of the broadcasts lay less in initiating problems or inspiring direct action in these volatile territories than in providing local residents with constant reminders of a sovereign past, social and political injustices, and geographical and cultural proximity to alternative ways of life.

CHAPTER 16

Water Shaping the Rock: Cold War Broadcasting Impact in Latvia

PETER ZVAGULIS

Each of the Western broadcasters played a role in the battle of the airwaves that took place during the Cold War. Before RFE/RL began broadcasting in 1975 (initially as part of Radio Liberty, later as part of Radio Free Europe), VOA was the only major Western Latvian-language radio. Radio Vatican also broadcast in Latvian. The broadcasts were heavily jammed. Nonetheless, the jamming was only partly successful, since Western broadcasters used a variety of techniques to overcome it.¹ Since Radio Sweden started programming in Latvian only in 1989, it cannot really be regarded as a Cold War broadcaster. By then all Soviet jamming had ceased. Deutsche Welle and BBC never broadcast in Latvian, although many Latvians listened to their Russian-language programs.

During the Cold War, then, only RFE/RL and VOA had programming that was specifically meant for the Latvian audience. Because of the surrogate nature of its programming, RFE/RL was perceived by listeners as more interested in their daily lives, more sympathetic to their pro-independence aspirations, and more anti-Soviet than VOA. The Soviet authorities devoted considerable resources to counter-measures: monitoring, jamming, counter-propaganda, political persecution. But by forcing Soviet authorities on to the defensive, these measures often proved counterproductive. They increased the credibility and appeal of RFE/RL and other Western broadcasters. Ironically, in combating RFE/RL's broadcasts, the Soviet elite itself, including high-ranking KGB officers, were influenced by Western information.²

The Soviet authorities over-estimated the capabilities and coordination of Western broadcasts to Latvia. They perceived RFE/RL as an inte-

¹ See Chapter Four.

² Remarks of former KGB official Oleg Kalugin to the 2004 Hoover conference.

gral part of a smoothly functioning, highly centralized Western propaganda system. Even though some efforts at cooperation were made between individual broadcasters, it was far from what the Soviets believed. Pavils Bruvers, a veteran broadcaster of the RFE/RL Latvian Service and a former dissident, said that there was little cooperation between RFE/RL and VOA language services. As for cooperation with the Latvian diaspora in Western countries, it was spontaneous rather than organized.³ Describing the approach of the RFE/RL Latvian Service, Bruvers said:

We had great creative freedom. We were limited only by the professional principles of journalism, and we were required to provide objective information. Propaganda and inflammatory content were not allowed. We promoted Western values and democracy by means of professional journalism.⁴

The basic principle of surrogate broadcasting was irritating to Latvia's Soviet leadership. It gave listeners a chance to compare Western and domestic coverage of the same events. The comparison was not favorable to the Soviet media.

Regime Countermeasures

The Soviet authorities devoted considerable resources to countering Western broadcasts. These included monitoring, jamming, counter-propaganda, and political persecution.

Monitoring of Western Broadcasts

Soviet authorities in Latvia considered Western broadcasts important and dangerous, and they organized detailed monitoring and analysis of the broadcasts, even during the *perestroika* period. In Latvia, most monitor-

³ For a few years, starting in 1980, there was an amateur publication "The World and We" published by the World Federation of Free Latvians (WFFL), which was based on the programs of the RFE/RL Latvian Service. During his leisure time Pavils Bruvers and some of his colleagues compiled the materials and wrote the articles. Julijs Kadelis, director of the WFFL Information branch, was the editor and publisher.

⁴ Pavils Bruvers interview with the author.

ing of Western broadcasting was done by the Latvian Committee for Radio and Television Broadcasting (LCRTB). The late former Soviet diplomat and political commentator Nikolajs Neilands said that monitoring quality was not always good because of jamming. Trusted journalists or political commentators did the monitoring for the LCRTB:

As I remember, they were 2 or sometimes 3 people who did [the monitoring]. During the day they worked at the radio as journalists but in the evening they tried to monitor. It was not a special [full-time] position. They were normal journalists.⁵

Neilands named two of the journalists who participated in the monitoring project: Imants Deksenieks and “Kostja.” They used the monitoring information in their commentaries on Latvian TV and radio the following day.⁶

In addition, the KGB prepared summaries of Western broadcasts concerning a particular topic of interest and comparing information from the programs of several radio stations. A limited number of such KGB documents were found in Daugavpils, Eastern Latvia. It is not clear whether the summaries were a result of KGB monitoring from Moscow or were based on local Latvian, Lithuanian and other monitoring products. These summaries dealt with topics that were embarrassing for the Soviet leadership or indicated a possible information leak from the Soviet Union:

Radio station “Radio Free Europe” (Latvian Service) informed, quoting as source archbishop of the Latvian Lutheran church, Matulis J.P., that currently there are 206 Lutheran parishes in the Latvian SSR but only 100 priests, and that there are around 50 students at the Theology Seminary in Riga.⁷

⁵ Nikolajs Neilands, interview with the author, Riga, 2003.

⁶ This local Latvian monitoring was carried out in addition to central Soviet monitoring done at a location near Moscow. Latvian Party leaders and the local KGB did not receive the complete central transcripts but only what the center believed they should pay attention to. The central reports arrived with some delay. Local Party and KGB leadership needed more timely information and so they initiated this project.

⁷ KGB document NS=0302461, November 28, 1984, sent from the Secretariat of the KGB of the USSR to the Secretariat of the KGB of the Latvian SSR.

Radio station “Radio Free Europe” in its broadcast in Lithuanian informed that Lithuanian émigrés, jointly with other Baltic émigrés in Australia, are doing a lot of lobbying to obtain from the Australian parliament a resolution recognizing the “problems of the Baltic countries,” similar to the resolution that two years ago was passed by the “European Parliament” in Strasbourg (08.10.84). Senator Peter Bom, according to this radio, has introduced a draft resolution with the idea that Australia should support the Baltic rights for self-determination at the UN. The draft resolution says that the Baltic countries had been occupied by the Soviet Union as the result of a secret agreement with Germany. The opposition parties of Australia are supporting this resolution, but the position of the ruling party remains unclear.⁸

A commentary by Radio “Liberty” in Latvian contained data about the character and size of reconstruction works underway at the seaports of Riga and Ventspils; also data about the total volume and the character of merchandise passing through those seaports. [...] It also contained data about the current modernization of the Riga naval base at the mouth of Daugava River, which is considered by Western military experts as one of the main strongholds of the Soviet Baltic fleet. [...] Counter-admiral Malkov was named as the commander of the naval base.⁹

Compared to these KGB documents (from 1974, 1984, and 1988), the better-known monitoring by the LCRTB seems more ideologically tainted and less factual. LCRTB materials tend to prompt the reader to use the material for specific propaganda purposes. The tone of the summaries is almost always negative, as if the monitor had to prove his or her allegiance to the Soviet cause. The following are fragments from the LCRTB monthly summary of broadcasts by VOA, RFE, and Radio Vatican for December 1987:

Covering the arrival of M. Gorbachev in Washington for the summit with President R. Reagan, the radio stations [...] were extensively talking about the demonstrations near the White House in Washington, pro-

⁸ KGB document NS=0302699, November 5–28, 1984, sent from the Secretariat of the KGB of the USSR to the Secretariat of the KGB of the Latvian SSR.

⁹ KGB document NS=0302370, October 2, 1984, sent from the Secretariat of the KGB of the USSR to the Secretariat of the KGB of the Latvian SSR.

testing the presence of the Soviet troops in Afghanistan, against the persecution of dissidents in the Soviet Union, about the rights of the Soviet Jews to emigrate. [...]

During the month in review there were practically no materials that would have direct relation to the economic, cultural, or intellectual life of Latvia. [...]

The developments in Latvia were reflected mostly through the viewpoint of “dissidents”. [...] At the beginning of this month the radios informed that on November 30 “the Latvian human rights activists extradited from Latvia have arrived in Vienna. They are the members of the group Helsinki-86 and initiators of the demonstrations of June 14, August 23, and November 18, Janis Barkans and Raimonds Bitenieks. VOA and RFE introduced Barkans as temporary a leader of the group Helsinki-86, and Bitenieks as one of the founders of the group.

Sometimes the anonymous monitor judged Western broadcasts to be less subversive than expected:

[...] the “declaration of independence” of Latvia had a lot of coverage in the programs of all three radios, but it was very different from the campaigns of those radios around June 14 and August 23 of this year. Despite the abundance of material the broadcasts suffered from lack of purpose. The radios did not broadcast appeals by H-86 or any other group to participate in demonstrations: on the contrary, they reminded people to be careful.

A correction by RFE of an inaccurate news item was perceived by the Soviet monitor as an admission of defeat by the Western broadcaster:

[...] Already on November 20 RFE announced (obviously they experienced some pressure that made them act this way) that “yesterday evening the Baltic Helsinki group in Stockholm has admitted that some of the information distributed by this source have been inaccurate” (!) and that “the Western correspondents reported from Riga only about a quiet demonstration along the perimeter of militia and security forces around the monument of Liberty.”

Direct quotes from programs were rare for this type of monitoring summaries. Much more often the monitors used vague generic sentences:

Strikingly, a lot of attention is devoted to the internal situation in the USSR, looking at it mostly from the point of view of *perestroika*. In this sense the entire spectrum of anti-Soviet colors and definitions is used. The commentaries and press reviews of the radios revolve around a formula invented by RFE that can be defined as “the current Soviet situation has reached a dead-end...”

In the monitoring materials for November 1987 there was a warning remark:

[The document] was signed by the group Helsinki-86 on October 22, 1987 in Riga. As we can see, the next day, October 23, the document was in the hands of Free Europe.

The issue of dissidents in Latvia was carefully avoided by the local media, and so the Western information contained in the monitoring materials was probably the only source even for trusted Soviet propaganda experts. Monitoring for August 1987 had this information:

In the second half of the month, on August 20, the radios informed that the Latvian Baptist pastor and human rights activist Janis Rozkalns had received an order to leave the USSR with his family within ten days. There was a very detailed description of Rozkalns’s biography and human rights activities; it included information about his education and professional life—something that has never been mentioned in connection with the other “extradited” person R. Silaraups. There has not yet been any information from the radios about Rozkalns and his family leaving the USSR.

Reports about human rights activities and US government initiatives were perceived by the Soviet monitors as American interference in their internal affairs:

On August 12 the radios broadcast news that Latvian and Lithuanian human rights activists have notified about the demonstrations to be held on August 23 “to mark the 48 anniversary since USSR and Hitler’s Germany signed the Molotov–Ribbentrop pact.”

[...] After that VOA broadcast a letter by a group of US Senators to Soviet leader Gorbachev asking him not to take measures against the

organizers of the demonstrations and not to disturb the ceremonies of August 23.

[...] RFE broadcast a letter by Helsinki-86 to US Senators thanking them for their letter to Gorbachev and the support expressed in their letter to the fate of Linards Grantins.

Another type of monitoring materials from the LCRTB was a quarterly summary on issues of religion and religious freedom, "Review of Clerical Propaganda by Radio Stations Voice of America, Free Europe, and Radio Vatican." Most of the information in this selection focused on the broadcasts of Radio Vatican. RFE and VOA were mentioned mostly in connection with human rights issues affecting the religious life of Latvia. The following is a sample text from the monitoring summary for October–December, 1987:

The main idea of clerical propaganda in the review period was the allegation that the purpose of the Rebirth and Renewal group is to serve as a Christian human rights group in Latvia because the official leadership of the Latvian Lutheran Church has become an instrument in the hands of the atheist state. In connection with this, the radios informed that the émigré Latvian Lutheran Church in America has sent a warning letter to E. Kokars-Trops, State Commissioner for Religious Affairs, asking him not to interfere in the internal affairs of the Church, and promising that his activities will be noticed by the US Congress, National Council of Churches, and the World Lutheran Association.

[...] they alleged that there is no hope for improvement in the life of religious people in the Soviet Union. Despite the slogans of democratization and *perestroika*, the persecution of religious activists has not stopped; they are still in detention in prisons, psychiatric clinics; the activities of pastors are still restricted.

As with dissidents, Western broadcasts seemed to be the only source of information available to the monitors on other sensitive issues:

With the approach of the great religious anniversary—1000 years of Christianity in Russia—the clerical radio propaganda paid a lot of attention to the situation of the Church and religion in the Soviet Union during *perestroika*.

It appears from the broadcasts that these questions were quite largely discussed at various international conferences, at the meetings of politicians, émigrés, and religious leaders; they have an important place in the internal and foreign affairs of Vatican.

The radios informed that before Ronald Reagan's visit to Moscow there was an informative meeting of American political and religious leaders at the White House in Washington [on] "Religious Freedom in the USSR." Many representatives of the émigrés from Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine etc. participated in the meeting and reported on the situation in different regions of the USSR.

Jamming of Western Broadcasts to Latvia

By resorting to jamming, the Soviet authorities were making a tacit acknowledgement that counter-propaganda and repression of listeners were not sufficient to reduce the influence of Western broadcasting in Latvia. Jamming required considerable financial investment, including the construction of huge transmitter sites. According to a retired Soviet-era engineer, Uldis Rutks, who worked at the government transmitting facilities, the jamming was a complicated, centrally-controlled broadcasting system oriented mostly on shortwave (SW) jamming, although medium waves (MW) were also jammed. Supervisors at the transmitting sites received orders indicating time, frequency, and power specifications directly from the KGB in Moscow. The audio signal to be broadcast also came on tape from Moscow. It was changed from time to time, apparently in an attempt to discourage amateur constructors of illegal anti-jamming devices. Each new signal had a different range of audio frequencies. In one case, Soviet authorities even experimented with a pre-recorded radio program in English played in reverse mode. There were four permanent jamming sites in Latvia: in Riga, Liepaja, Ventspils, and Daugavpils. The only full-time jamming facility was in Riga. It was a purpose-built facility in the Soviet 600-series which consisted of two metal towers connected by SW transmitting antenna, and a 12-program broadcasting center. As Rutks recalled:

The transmitter was a Soviet KV5 [Russian abbreviation for 5 kW SW transmitter]. The bodies of the two towers and the antenna worked as one huge antenna. The 600-series were standard facilities for all the

capital cities of the Soviet republics. Exact copies of the Riga facility existed in Tallinn and Vilnius. In Soviet technical slang they were called the “horned series” because of their two towers connected by antenna. They were serviced by shifts of 15 technicians and a few supervisors.¹⁰

The other three permanent jamming facilities in Latvia were part time. Besides jamming, they were used for SW communication with the Soviet merchant marine and for Soviet Civil Defense. Any other broadcasting facility in Latvia could receive orders to broadcast a jamming signal (for example the two 50 kW MW transmitters in Rezekne). The Riga facility was located in the central residential part of the city on Erglu street, just a few dozen meters off the main street (Lenin Street at the time). According to Guntars Plucis, Technical Director of Latvian State Radio, the local jamming facilities were equipped to jam the SW signal on the 25 meter frequency and above, but they were not able to jam 19 and 16 meters and lower bands. Rutks explained this in terms of Soviet regulations, which authorized mass production of SW commercial receivers equipped with 25 meter bands and higher.¹¹

The local jamming facilities in Latvia were only effective in the immediate surrounding area. Because of SW ionosphere reflection, Moscow region jamming facilities jammed the rest of the Latvian territory. Each jamming session was ordered directly from Moscow. Because of the complicated central command system, the first one to five minutes of Western broadcasts were not jammed. Jamming consisted of several steps. First, KGB monitoring stations identified the exact frequency and power of the Western transmitter. Second, they sent this information to the KGB command center. Third, the command center ordered broadcasting facilities to start jamming on the specified frequency at a specified power. Fourth, the technicians at the facility adjusted the equipment and started jamming. After that the monitoring stations checked the quality of what was called, in Soviet technical slang, “coverage” of the Western signal. If more power was needed, then additional facilities were ordered to join the jamming, and the four-step command procedure started up again for those facilities. Complete jamming of a particular Western signal could thus take up to 10 minutes from the beginning of the broadcast.

¹⁰ Uldis Rutks interview with the author, Riga, August 2004.

¹¹ Guntars Plucis, interview with the author, Riga, August 2004.

Rutks recollected that the Soviet authorities had different jamming policies for different Western broadcasters:

The Russian-language NTS [Narodno Trudovoy Soyuz, Russian émigré organization] station was the highest priority and was jammed completely. RFE/RL was jammed almost completely; VOA was jammed selectively. BBC was jammed sometimes, as was Deutsche Welle (DW). Radio Sweden never was jammed.

Shortwave jamming was a technically complicated task and not always successful. Because of the SW ionospheric reflection principle, much depended on the meteorological conditions at the broadcasting site and in the target area. Jamming was least successful at night (in Soviet territory) when, depending on the weather, there was a chance of the SW signal reflecting off much higher atmospheric strata than usual. The broadcasters could also take advantage of the sunspot cycle.¹² Adjusting to all these factors sometimes could take the Soviet jamming system up to the end of a Western broadcast. Rutks said that from time to time the Soviets simply abandoned jamming at late night.

Even when jamming was successful, the psychological effect on the audience was not always what had been hoped for. Many former listeners have told me that jamming convinced them that Western radios must be telling the truth. Ironically, Rutks said, Soviet jamming added to the credibility of Western broadcasts. Abrams Kleckins, a professor of journalism at the University of Latvia, agreed. He said that jamming probably discouraged some listeners, but it angered most of the intellectuals and made them listen to Western radios even more. Jamming was counterproductive because it alienated the intellectuals from the regime.¹³

Soviet Counter-Propaganda

Only experienced and trusted Soviet propaganda masters were allowed to counter Western broadcasting. Most Soviet Latvian publications attacking Western broadcasts were written in Moscow, and later translated and published in Latvia. The Deputy Chairman of the Latvian Committee for Radio and Television, Peteris Jerans, was one of the few exceptions to this

¹² See Chapter Four for a full explanation.

¹³ Abrams Kleckins interview with the author.

rule. In 1971 he wrote his own book about the Western radios, *Attention! Anti-Communism On-Air*.¹⁴ Published in 1972, it was meant to serve as a guideline for Communist Party activists and journalists in Latvia. Besides VOA, it attacked Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, although neither RFE nor RL broadcast in Latvian at that time. It is not known why this Soviet propaganda publication paid so much attention to RFE/RL. Was it the Kremlin's imposed standard approach to the topic of Western broadcasting? Or did it betray the KGB's awareness of Baltic diaspora lobbying efforts in the US to start RFE/RL broadcasts in Latvian, Lithuanian, and Estonian? A detailed description of this lobbying effort (prepared by the KGB in January 1974) was later found in the former KGB archives in Latvia.¹⁵ Jerans's book was one of the few anti-Western-broadcasting books published in Latvia. It was the only one to use specific Latvian examples and to be written by a well-known Latvian political commentator.¹⁶

As deputy chairman of Soviet TV and radio in Latvia, Peteris Jerans supervised the broadcasting entities competing directly with Western broadcasters for the same audience. His book included recommendation for Latvian propaganda professionals working in Soviet mass media. Identifying Western "ideological subversion" as the main reason for problems in Communist society, Jerans described the approach of Western broadcasting with an alleged quotation from an unspecified, secret USIA instruction:

Most of the audiences that we are targeting, with few exceptions, are familiar with the old methods of propaganda: exaggeration, half-truth, and lies. They are outraged by such propaganda and are against it.¹⁷

Jerans warned against listening to the arguments of such "seasoned anti-Communists" as Zbigniew Brzezinski and Samuel Huntington, and de-

¹⁴ Peteris Jerans, *Uzmanību! Etera Antikomunisms* (Riga: Liesma, 1972).

¹⁵ Untitled KGB document of January 1974, NS=0018476.

¹⁶ Commenting on this book, the Director of the Latvian Center for Documentation of the Crimes of the Totalitarian Regimes, Indulis Zalīte, said: "He could not have had all the information he used in the book. It is obvious that he was provided with information about number of employees, budget figures, and work schedules [of Western broadcasters] by an organization which knew it all. It must have been written in cooperation with the KGB." (Interview with the author, Riga, 2003.)

¹⁷ Jerans, op.cit., 13.

nounced the notion of building bridges between the two systems, a method he said was used by imperialist ideologists to establish contacts with people who still had in their mind some residue of the old social order:

As the managers of Free Europe have declared, the main goal [...] is to attract the audience to Western standards. [...] They have all kind of methods to monitor radio broadcasts, to process and analyze more than 700 press publications. Interviews with betrayers of the socialist cause, contacts with decadent people from socialist countries, and the traditional spying—all serve this same goal.¹⁸

Although Jerans carefully avoided spreading information about Soviet domestic problems, he did mention dissident trials in Latvia that had become common knowledge, and deplored the fact that unspecified people in Latvia had been led astray by Western propaganda:

In the summer of 1971 there was a court session in Riga. The accused were four young people. The oldest was 33 and the youngest 23 years old. Step by step, absorbing the poison of bourgeois ideology, they finally committed anti-Soviet crimes. Their criminal activities against the Soviet system unveiled, they confessed their crimes and begged the court to reduce their sentences.¹⁹

The topic of Western broadcasting to Latvia was considered by the local *nomenklatura* to be very dangerous and sensitive. Only at the end of his book did Jerans specifically discuss Latvian-language broadcasts by VOA:

Voice of America is broadcasting answers to questions that they allegedly have received from the listeners in Soviet Latvia.

[...] Please pay attention to the fact that Voice of America answers a question from an anonymous listener. The analysis of numerous broadcasts reveals that in reality there is no such letter with a question from a listener; sometimes even the employees of the radio have unwillingly admitted that there is no such listener or a letter from a listener.²⁰

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid., 75.

Other anti-Western-broadcast propaganda books published in Latvia were written in Moscow and translated from Russian into Latvian. Some were also published in Russian, for the use of Communist Party activists. One such book, *Problema Svobody Cheloveka v Sovremenoy Ideologicheskoy Borbe* (Riga: Zinatne, 1987) was a compilation of propaganda-related articles. Out of the nine authors, only one, R. Pudels, was Latvian, and he was the only one to discuss Western broadcasting to Latvia. Pudels portrayed all Western research and broadcasting institutions as a huge well-coordinated espionage network. Another book by N. Shitov, *Socialistiskais Internacionalisms un Patriotisms* (Riga: Liesma, 1973) was one of the few books published in Latvian that was specifically focused on Western broadcasting. Articles in newspapers and in the two political monthlies *Padomju Latvijas Komunisti* and *Jautajumi un Atbildes*, written by Moscow authors (Karpovics, Smolensky, Smarov, Dimov, Milin and Grechuhin), also attacked Western broadcasting.

Soviet propaganda about Western broadcasting was only partially successful. It managed to scare people: many got the warning message that listening to foreign radio stations is a punishable activity. Some stayed away from such a risky endeavor, others took great care to camouflage their activity. Soviet propaganda was able to convince many listeners that Western broadcasting was part of Western intelligence operations. It seems that this conspiracy myth appealed to great numbers of the audience. They believed—some still believe—that American international broadcasting is a CIA-controlled operation. One such listener, Ojars Rubenis, later became chairman of the Council for Radio and TV of independent Latvia. Even former dissident Pavils Bruvers, admitted that, when he was hired by the radios, he was surprised to discover that RFE/RL was just a media organization.²¹ Paradoxically, in the eyes of the audience, the alleged intelligence link added to the prestige of the radios. Many listeners felt encouraged by their belief that important Western government agencies were involved in combating Communist propaganda. This gave them additional reason to hope that Soviet totalitarianism would be defeated. People enjoyed listening to what they believed was subversion against their oppressors.

²¹ Interview with author, op. cit.

Repression against Listeners in Latvia

In Latvia in the 1970s and 1980s, according to Indulis Zalite, listening to Western radio stations was no longer sufficient grounds for sentencing someone to prison. Nevertheless, it was still perceived as a semi-criminal activity by the authorities and was used as aggravating evidence against anyone accused of anti-Soviet activities. Telling someone about the content of Western broadcast was still a punishable crime: it was considered “dissemination of anti-Soviet propaganda.”

One of the most courageous Latvian dissidents was Gunars Astra. He was twice sentenced to lengthy prison terms: in 1961 and 1983. Listening to Western radios was mentioned as aggravating circumstantial evidence at both trials. In 1983 Astra was also accused of recording the broadcasts on tape with the purpose of making the recordings available to others. In the words of a Latvian study published in 2000:

In 1983 two Latvian dissidents were sentenced to lengthy prison terms for anti-Soviet activities. Among the crimes of which Astra was incriminated was the recording on tape of Western radio broadcasts. The trial lasted from December 1 to December 19, 1983. In his closing speech Astra unmasked the lies of the Soviet regime. The Soviet authorities afterwards censured even the official court transcripts. His words however were not in vain. Two other dissidents: Juris Ziemelis and Alfreds Stinkuls secretly recorded his speech at the court session and smuggled the audiocassette abroad. A few days later his speech was broadcast by VOA and Radio Free Europe.²²

Veteran RFE/RL broadcaster, Pavils Bruvers, who retrieved the audiocassette, corrected the account of the timing of that broadcast. According to him, it was not two or three days later, but two or three years after the closing speech, for Soviet authorities successfully blocked efforts to send the tape to the West before that:

It was in 1985 or 1986. Alfreds Stinkuls had managed to smuggle the audiocassette with the recording across the Soviet border. He called me from Stockholm and said that he urgently needed to meet me. He said that

²² *Okupācijas Varu Nodarītie Postījumi Latvijā* (Stockholm & Toronto: Memento—Daugavas Vanagi, 2000)

he had something very important. He refused to specify. My management sent me to Stockholm and I received the tape. We played it on air a few days later. We later shared this material with the colleagues from VOA.²³

Summaries of the investigative cases of the Latvian KGB, available at the Latvian Center for Documentation of the Crimes of the Totalitarian Regimes, contain many examples of people who were prosecuted for listening to Western broadcasts and spreading “anti-Soviet” views:

Sulimov V.P. was spreading the content of anti-Soviet radio broadcasts among his acquaintances: he made anti-Soviet remarks; spoke highly about Western way of life; voiced treacherous intentions... Twice he already has been submitted to prophylactic treatment because of dissemination of the content of anti-Soviet radio broadcasts and treacherous intentions.²⁴

Our source has learned from the mother of Malishev N.A. that he is dissatisfied with life in the USSR and is regularly listening to BBC broadcasts.²⁵

Engineer Kadikis R.T. greeted his employees with the independence of bourgeois Latvia [...] he spoke highly about the living standards in the USA on the basis of information heard from foreign anti-Soviet radio broadcasts.²⁶

During a prolonged period of time in 1979 Jaundzems regularly made ideologically destructive statements among his closest acquaintances... He made the above-mentioned statements because of his political illiteracy, and because he was listening to foreign radio broadcasts of the Voice of America.²⁷

In September 1980 citizen Sobinov produced ideologically destructive written materials and together with another student, Maloshenko, was

²³ Interview with author, op. cit.

²⁴ Untitled KGB document NS=005345 from 1965.

²⁵ Untitled KGB document NS=005335, based on the reports by agent “Ksenia,” 1975.

²⁶ Untitled KGB document NS=0053639, based on reports by agent “Zanis,” 1975.

²⁷ Untitled KGB document NS=005052, 1979.

preparing to illegally leave the country... During the prophylactic treatment Sobinov admitted that he had engaged in illegal border crossing activities because he was under the influence of foreign anti-Soviet radio broadcasts of the Voice of America and Deutsche Welle.²⁸

There are many more documents like this. They contain the names of people persecuted because they listened to Western radio broadcasts and told others about the content of the programs: Vergun, Tiltins, Otomers, Placens, Grantins, Dambitis, Lazdans, Jacin and many others. Occasionally the codenames of agents reporting to the KGB appear.

Future examination of the thousands of investigative summaries available in the Latvian archives will provide a fuller picture of the extent of Soviet repression against listeners to Western broadcasts in Latvia. The director of the Latvian Center for Documentation of the Crimes of the Totalitarian Regimes, Indulis Zalite, believes that the scale of repression was impressive, noting that the number of anti-Soviet resistance groups uncovered was surprisingly high for such a small country as Latvia. On average the Latvian KGB liquidated six to twelve such groups each year. All the accused were incriminated with actively listening to and telling others about the content of Western broadcasting, among other things. Zalite adds that, while analyzing the former KGB archives for other purposes, he has discovered that almost all investigative files contained some reference to people listening to Western broadcasts.

Impact of Broadcasts

During the Cold War, polls and other methods of direct audience research were not possible in Soviet-controlled Latvia, and so other methods had to be used. Soviet authorities considered any attempt to collect information as espionage. Even students conducting their own sociological research were considered criminals by the totalitarian regime.²⁹ During the Cold War, population samples had to be replaced by computer simulation based on systematically gathered data obtained from tourists and other

²⁸ Untitled KGB document NS=005055, 1980.

²⁹ KGB document NS=0053259 on a questionnaire distributed by Bruvers, Silins, Vinkelis, Riga, February 1974.

travelers from behind the Iron Curtain (see chapter 5). Not until 1990 were researchers able to obtain data from internal surveys.

Traveler data collected and analyzed by RFE/RL's Soviet Area Audience and Opinion Research Department indicated the following audiences to Western stations in the USSR (the sample sizes below refer to the entire USSR; the Baltic subsets were 12% and 11% respectively):

Annual Reach of Western Stations in USSR

	<i>1988</i> N=5,233	<i>1989</i> N=4,593
RFE/RL	11.3%	20.7%
VOA	17.1%	12.8%
BBC	9.8%	9.3%
DW	2.6%	3.0%

The large increase in audience size for RFE/RL between 1988 and 1989 is due to the lifting of jamming on November 22, 1988.

Weekly Reach of Western Stations in USSR

	<i>1988</i>	<i>1989</i>
RFE/RL	10.0%	16.8%
VOA	14.8%	13.0%
BBC	7.9%	6.4%
DW	1.7%	1.7%

Although there are no specific measurements for the Cold War audience in Latvia, the measurements that were done for the Baltic region seem to be fairly accurate.

In 1988 the weekly reach of RFE/RL in the Baltic region of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania was 11.3%. After the cessation of jamming in November 1988 it reached its all-time high of 20.7% in 1989.³⁰

³⁰ RFE/RL Soviet Area Audience and Opinion Research Analysis report 2-90. "Revised Geographic Listening Estimates to Foreign Radio in the USSR for

This quantitative audience data is supplemented by the testimony of dissidents and leaders of post-Soviet independent Latvia. There were two types of resistance to the Soviet regime and the information blockade it imposed on the population of Latvia: active and passive. The active resistance consisted of organizing human rights groups, disseminating tape recordings of Western broadcasts, or simply expressing an opinion publicly. This type of resistance came to the attention of the KGB. It is well documented and was discussed above. Janis Rozkalns, a prominent former dissident, recalled:

Free Europe, VOA, and Swedish Radio had great influence on the opinion of the audience. They were an important source of information. Every right-minded Latvian traditionally was listening to those broadcasts and had an anti-jamming device. Recording and transcribing the text of broadcasts was a widespread phenomenon. Every aspect of Western information: politics, culture, science was useful and needed because the Soviets had created an information vacuum. At the Latvian underground resistance movement we knew some of the broadcasters from RFE/RL personally.

Asked about the effectiveness of Soviet jamming, Rozkalns said that in his opinion it only increased the credibility and importance of Western broadcasts. He also said that anti-jamming devices were in great demand, and that a friend of his who was a technician was so busy producing them that people had to wait for several weeks to get one. He added:

Everybody was struggling against jamming in his own way. In the central part of Riga around Pernavas Street, near the [jamming] towers, it was impossible to do anything about the jamming. Everywhere else people found smart ways of reducing its effect. Sometimes this included placing the receiver close to some other electric or electronic device such as a refrigerator or TV or finding a particular place in a building where something shielded [the receiver] from jamming. Many listened during the night when the sky was dark and deep, but there were periods when even the best anti-jamming devices did not help.

1988 and 1989: Introduction of Log-Linear Imputation Techniques for Geographic Estimates.” June 1990.

Asked which Western broadcasts and what kind of information was particularly important to Latvian dissidents, Rozkalns said:

Besides the programming in Latvian, we regularly listened to [Radio] Liberty and BBC in Russian. They gave an overview of the human rights situation in the whole Soviet Union, and [informed] about the newest tendencies in the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party; about Academician Sakharov.

Asked if he and his acquaintances believed the Soviet propaganda myth that Western radios were branches of Western intelligence services, the former dissident admitted that he partially believed it:

Soviet press regularly published such allegations. Many in the resistance believed it and rejoiced about it. They regarded this as an assurance that the Western broadcasters really were on our side. Later, when I heard from RFE/RL and VOA about the Congressional appropriation process, I was no longer so sure about the intelligence connection, but it was encouraging to hear that the US Congress was spending considerable amounts of money on this broadcasting. It proved to me that the governments of great Western countries were seriously interested in our fate.³¹

Former Latvian dissidents, including Bruvers and Rozkalns, believe that RFE/RL broadcasts gave moral strength to them and hope to the rest of the population.

Passive resistance consisted mostly of listening to Western broadcasts in secret. Outside Riga, people installed powerful reception antennas, many of them camouflaged. Some residents of Riga regularly visited their friends outside the capital city and listened to the broadcasts. Others managed to acquire clever devices to reduce the effect of jamming:

In the 1950s, as a high-school student and later a student at the Latvian University, I used to visit engineer Ojars Zigurs in Baltezers who had managed to create a device for neutralizing the jamming of Radio Free Europe and RIAS. We recorded songs on tape [...] to be the first ones to play them in Latvia. From the time when the broadcasts came from

³¹ Janis Rozkalns interview with the author, Riga, August 2004.

Munich, I remember the voices of Maruta Karklis and Pavils Bruvers (Jansons).³²

Another expert building anti-jamming devices was Uldis Rutks, who worked at the state broadcasting facility. He explained that the anti-jamming devices were audio-frequency filters, something similar to modern equalizers. They filtered out part of the jamming noise and made the speech or other audio signal more understandable, although poorer in frequency spectrum.³³ However, building filters was a risky business that could lead to criminal charges. The most common form of passive resistance was building high-frequency (13, 16 and 19 meter) converter-blocks into commercial transistor receivers. Many technicians earned extra money that way. It was less risky both for the customer and for the technician because the installation of the high-frequency block was not considered illegal. The export versions of many Soviet-built receivers had this block and sometimes could be purchased at state-owned electronics shops. Ironically, the bureaucratic inflexibility of the regulations concerning 25 meters and higher made life easier for a large SW audience. Listening to Western broadcasts on 13, 16, and 19-meter bands was relatively easy and successful. Listening late at night, when jamming was difficult, was also popular among the regular listeners to Western radios.

The passive type of resistance is less documented because the Soviet authorities could not trace it. To have more information about its scale and intensity one would need to conduct in-country opinion polls and extensive interviews among population segments and age groups that may have been listeners to Western broadcasts during the Cold War. Both active and passive resistance served to form public opinion in ways that were different from official propaganda slogans. It seems safe to say that, by building a momentum of critical public opinion that was no longer controlled by the Soviet authorities, Western broadcasting significantly accelerated the collapse of the Communist regime and the USSR.

Many of the current Latvian political, religious and intellectual opinion leaders listened to Western broadcasting during the Cold War. RFE/

³² The listener is confusing VOA with RFE. Ms. Karklis only joined RFE/RL in 1996 in Prague, although Mr. Bruvers was indeed a Munich veteran of RFE's Latvian service. This particular listener was a media professional: during the Soviet period he worked as an announcer at Latvian State Radio.

³³ Interview with the author, op. cit.

RL, VOA and BBC were often their most trusted sources of information. Many have said that the information in these broadcasts helped to shape their opinions and develop independent political thinking. Among them are the chair of the Latvian Parliament, Ingrida Udre; the former President of Latvia, Guntis Ulmanis; the former Prime Minister of Latvia, Andris Berzins; the former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Valdis Birkavs; the Archbishop of the Latvian Lutheran Church, Janis Vanags; the MPs Janis Jurkans and Aleksandrs Kiršteins; the former Chairman of the Latvian Council for Radio and TV, Ojars Rubenis; and several leading Latvian scholars.

Former Latvian President Vaira Vike-Freiberga has on numerous occasions praised the role of RFE/RL during the darkest periods of the Cold War. She said that the broadcasts kept alive Latvian hopes of regaining freedom and independence. Recognizing the importance and success of many years of American broadcasting to Latvia, the government of Latvia awarded the president of RFE/RL the highest civilian honor of Latvia: the Three Star Order.

Inta Brikse, Dean of the Faculty of Sociology at the University of Latvia and one of the leading academic personalities of Latvia, gave the following opinion on the role of Western broadcasting to Latvia:

[Western broadcasts] reminded us that the world did not end at the Iron Curtain; and that people on the other side could think differently from what was allowed in the USSR.³⁴

Janis Vanags, Archbishop of Latvia, commented on the same topic:

The role [of Western broadcasting during the Cold War] was enormous. It concerned not just politics but also culture, arts, and science. I myself listened to those broadcasts and they had an important role in shaping the society I was living in.³⁵

Asked about the importance of information that Western broadcasters provided on the state of religious freedom and fate of religious dissidents in the USSR, Janis Vanags added:

³⁴ Interview with Inta Brikse, Riga, August 2004.

³⁵ Janis Vanags interview with the author, Riga, August 2004.

Western information about the dissidents, and those persecuted because of their faith, was very important for protecting those people. It was sort of an “insurance” policy. If a dissident was mentioned by Western radios it meant that the Soviet authorities, which pretended to respect human rights, had to be careful. They had to comply with certain legal requirements.

Many leading Latvian personalities and many ordinary citizens with whom I have spoken believe that Western broadcasting played an important role in breaking the Soviet information blockade and bringing uncensored information through the Iron Curtain. Regardless of their political views and whether they approved or disapproved of the end of the USSR, they all agreed that Western broadcasting accelerated the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Professor Abrams Kleckins, one of the most respected Latvian intellectuals and one of the founding fathers of current Latvian journalism, believes that Western broadcasts did not just serve as a constant reminder of the existence of a different life on the other side of the Iron Curtain, they also made people think, and form independent opinions. He said that, during the Cold War, people had to live their lives and make compromises with the regime. In his view, Western broadcasts offered an alternative perspective, and helped people not to forget their history. He said that the broadcasts prepared a fertile ground for the changes to come. When the pro-independence movement started, the whole staff of the official Latvian Communist newspaper *Cina* switched sides and joined the resistance—and that was only one example among many.³⁶

Conclusion

The role of Western broadcasting to Latvia during the Cold War was immense; perhaps even greater than the people involved in the broadcasts intended. It helped to liberate the spirit of the oppressed and gave them courage to claim back their human dignity, their right to selfdetermination, and their basic human rights. Soviet counter-measures—information blockade, propaganda, and jamming—were often counterproductive; they increased the audience’s interest in Western broadcasts and raised their credibility. Even the persecution of active listeners could not stop the spread of information. On the contrary, even the Soviet elite in Lat-

³⁶ Abrams Kleckins’ interview with the author.

via used Western broadcasting as reliable source of information. Soviet monitoring of Western broadcasts to Latvia to some extent influenced the thinking of Latvian KGB officers and top Communist officials. Even though they disapproved of Western values, they considered Western information to be 99% truthful. Western broadcasts prepared the ground for the democratic changes of the 1990s in Latvia, and helped the democratic opposition to develop its political and national identity.

As Professor Kleckins said: “[...] Western broadcasts worked over the years like water shaping the rock.”

A Note on Sources

Despite the abundance of archive materials, including thousands of KGB investigative summaries preserved at the Latvian Center for Documentation of the Crimes of the Totalitarian Regimes, the Cold War period in Latvia has not been academically studied. The efforts of Latvian historians so far have been concentrated mainly on two government-sponsored themes: World War Two, and the mass deportations of 1941 and 1949. The abundance of material and witnesses provides an excellent opportunity for further research into the still uncharted terrain of Cold War history in Latvia.

Unless otherwise noted, all interviews were conducted by the author in Latvia, expressly for this research. All translations from Latvian and Russian into English are by the author.

In addition to the references cited in the footnotes, I consulted the following sources:

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CHAPTER 17

Cold War International Broadcasting and the Road to Democracy

A. ROSS JOHNSON and R. EUGENE PARTA

This volume assesses the impact of Western broadcasts to the USSR and Eastern Europe during the Cold War based on evidence from Western and Communist-era archives and oral history interviews. External and internal audience surveys, elite testimony, and the sheer magnitude of the Communist regime countermeasures against the broadcasts demonstrate that their impact was indisputable.

Audience surveys among over 150,000 travelers to the West, formerly-secret internal surveys commissioned by the regime, and retrospective internal surveys commissioned after 1989 all indicate remarkably large regular audiences to Western broadcasts. It can be estimated that about one-third of the urban adult Soviet population and about one-half of the East European adult population listened to Western broadcasts after the 1950s (for precise figures see Chapter Five and Appendix C to Part Two). These large audiences were extended further by widespread word-of-mouth dissemination of information.

Western broadcasts were particularly important in influencing attitude and opinion formation during political crises. When the USSR shot down a Korean airliner in 1983, Western radios immediately reported the incident while Soviet media remained silent. After a week, the Soviet regime launched a major media campaign, in an attempt to mobilize Soviet public opinion behind the regime's position that the downing was accidental. But by this time many listeners had learned of the incident, and the Soviet responsibility for it, from Western radio. Outside information became more credible than the internal version of the event, and listeners were highly skeptical of the delayed Soviet media coverage. Three years later, Soviet media remained silent on the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear plant disaster for two whole days, without providing a full report on the incident or indicating the necessary health precautions. Western radio was the

first source of information on the disaster for over one-third of the Soviets queried in a survey, and the most complete source for most others. Western radio filled the gap when Soviet media was slow in reporting on a major issue. As was demonstrated by reactions to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, it contributed to the formation of attitudes that diverged from the official Party line.¹

Both Communist and post-Communist elites have testified to the importance of Western broadcasts. Václav Havel, in video greetings to the 2004 Hoover conference, said that RFE/RL's "influence and significance have been great and profound." Former Hungarian propaganda chief János Berecz, in a paper prepared for the conference, said: "I became convinced that Western broadcasts were among the accepted sources of information among the youth."² East German spymaster Markus Wolf, in his memoirs *Man Without a Face*, said, "Of all the various means used to influence people against the East during the Cold War, I would count [Radio Free Europe] as the most effective."³

The Communist regimes devoted considerable resources to countering Western broadcasts. As discussed in detail in preceding chapters, they organized radio jamming on a massive scale, spending more on jamming than the West did on broadcasting. They placed spies in the Western radios and attempted to interrupt the information about domestic developments that was flowing to the stations from inside the broadcast countries. They took reprisals against listeners and Radio employees. They organized counterpropaganda, while at the same time circulating monitoring reports of Western broadcasts among top officials to provide them with information not available from their own controlled media or intelligence services. Since counterpropaganda was obliged to acknowledge information provided by Western radio in order to deny it, the information benefited from additional amplification in local media. Regime countermeasures were a significant drain on domestic resources, yet they failed to neutralize Western broadcasts.

How do we explain the remarkable success of Western information programs that, in national security terms, cost very little? We have identi-

¹ See Chapter Five for a detailed discussion of these issues.

² János Berecz, "Impact of Western Broadcasting During the Cold War on Hungary," paper prepared for the 2004 Hoover Conference, RFE/RL Collection, Hoover Archives.

³ Markus Wolf, *Man Without a Face: The Autobiography of Communism's Greatest Spymaster* (New York: Public Affairs, 1997).

fied nine essential elements listed below (not necessarily in order of importance). Our analysis focuses on Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, which emphasized saturation home-service “surrogate” programming. Voice of America, the BBC, and other Western broadcasters also had a significant impact (in some countries and at certain periods, greater impact) for many of the same reasons.⁴

A caveat: we make no argument that RFE and RL performed flawlessly. Even when RFE and RL had reached their stride in the 1960s and 1970s, individual programs were aired that should not have been; individual managers and broadcasters performed poorly; far too much organizational time and energy were spent on bureaucratic and interpersonal conflict. Yet on balance RFE and RL were success stories, and we suggest that this was the case for the following reasons:

1. *A sense of purpose congruent with the aspirations and possibilities of the audiences.* Broadcasting had a purpose: to constrain Soviet power (without provoking suicidal revolt), to keep alive hope of a better future, to limit tyranny, to broaden the boundaries of internal debate, to encourage peaceful change—all in order to make the Soviet empire a less formidable adversary and one day overcome the division of Europe. These were long-term, strategic objectives, not short-term policy goals. They emerged after some fumbling in the early 1950s with notions of early “liberation,” “roll back” and “keep[ing] the pot boiling.”
2. *A capability for sophisticated appraisal of the adversary.* Significant Radio resources were devoted to detailed analyses of national Communist regimes and the societies they ruled, based on extensive information collection and associated research that drew on the Western press, official Communist sources, interviews with travelers, and regime opponents within the target countries. A cadre of specialized researchers was developed with deep area expertise. This information and analysis function was not envisaged at the outset. It was developed at the Radios over time in response to operational need. This resource provided major input to US Government, journalistic and scholarly analyses.

⁴ See Chapter Three; Heil, op.cit., 2003; Nelson, op.cit., 1997.

3. *Differentiated and tailored programs for multiple audiences within the target countries.* RFE and RL were saturation home services with something for everyone (although RL focused more on elites and the urban intelligentsia, and RFE more on the general population). Balanced world and regional news was a staple for all audiences. Programs for Communist elites included coverage of conflicts within (or between) Communist parties, and reports on social democracy in Europe. Programs for non-Communist elites covered Western culture and intellectual life and, as internal dissent developed, amplification of that dissent. Programs for general audiences covered everything from agriculture and religion to labor and sports. Banned Western and internal music was featured. Willis Conover of VOA introduced a generation of Russians and Poles to jazz, Géza Ekecz's "teenager party" program attracted a generation of Hungarian youth to RFE, and Western music attracted listeners in the other RFE target countries as well. In the USSR, *magnitizdat* introduced banned Soviet underground music to a wide public. Additionally, the *samizdat* phenomenon, literally "self-published" materials, which covered the range from political dissent to Nobel prize-winning literature, were a staple of Western broadcasting, and acquainted a broad listenership with the political and literary currents that were denied them by the censorship of their regimes.

4. *Programs that were purposeful, credible, responsible, and relevant to their audiences.* Events of the day were covered, but thematic programming was important as well (e.g. a series on parliamentary institutions in a democracy). Commentary with a point of view was included, along with straight news, news analysis, and Western press surveys, and audiences were attracted to star-quality commentators. Programs built and maintained credibility by reporting the bad news along with the good, for example in coverage of Watergate and Vietnam. Such objectivity, it was recognized, was crucial to credibility, which in turn was a prerequisite for impact.⁵ Responsible program-

⁵ As two RFE managers emphasized on one occasion: "Credibility is not an abstract consideration. It is a prerequisite of effectiveness. If we are not credible to our listeners, whatever hope we express will seem silly to them. Whatever influence we expect to exercise has to be grounded on credibility: ...we are not broadcasting simply what we ourselves are convinced of but we are broadcast-

ming at its best was calm in tone and, after the early 1950s, avoided tactical advice and especially any encouragement of violent resistance. Programming emphasized local developments and stayed in tune with the listeners thanks to constant audience feedback obtained from traveler surveys and listener mail, and management review.

5. *Decentralized broadcast organizations.* RFE and RL were the models, with autonomous country broadcasting units rather than central scripting. RFE and RL were not broadcasters *per se*, but networks of broadcasters in national languages. Over the years, VOA and BBC moved in this direction as well—and gained larger audiences. Émigré broadcast service directors, many with prominent reputations who knew their audiences intimately, were responsible for broadcast content, within broad policy guidelines and under American management oversight.
6. *Multi-media operations.* Distribution of printed materials supplemented broadcasting in some instances. In the early 1950s, program content was spread in Eastern Europe by balloon-dropped leaflets. Subsequently, leaflets, periodicals, Western books, and locally unpublished texts were distributed (by open mail and through travelers) in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.
7. *Appropriate funding and oversight mechanisms.* Sufficient public funding was provided by the Congress (although RFE raised significant private funds through the Crusade for Freedom, later the RFE Fund). The CIA covertly until 1971, and then the Board for International Broadcasting (BIB) overtly after 1972, made grants to RFE and RL and exercised fiscal oversight, working with the Office of Management and Budget, the Government Accounting Office, and Inspector Generals. The BBC World Service had an analogous relationship to the British Foreign Office.

ing to convince our audience. We must approach them in such a way so as to seem credible and convincing to them)” (RFE director of audience research. Robert C. Sorensen and RFE Romanian Service director Noel Bernard, quoted in RFE Memoranda for the Record, January 3 and January 6, 1958, RFE/RL Collection, Hoover Archives.

8. *Distance from official government policies and journalistic independence.* The CIA took a laissez-faire approach to RFE and RL—at the insistence of the Radios' influential Boards and CEOs. After 1973 the BIB provided a “firewall” between the Radios and the State Department, and other Executive Branch offices. The BIB legislation provided for “an independent broadcast media, operating in a manner not inconsistent with the broad foreign policy objectives of the United States and in accordance with high professional standards,” which gave RFE and RL considerable journalistic flexibility. Advocacy of specific US policies was not required, and in fact avoided. The BBC enjoyed similar autonomy in the British context. VOA's journalistic independence, affirmed in 1976 by law in the VOA Charter, was sometimes challenged by Administration policy interference and complicated by the requirement to broadcast Administration policy editorials.
9. *Receptive audiences that identified with many of the goals of the broadcasters.* Soviet and East European audiences lived in an “information-poor” environment, were subject to regime propaganda and censorship, and deprived of alternative information. East Europeans, artificially cut off from the rest of Europe, were largely pro-American. Soviet listeners were more influenced by the Communist regime, but a significant minority were pro-democratic (or at least proto-democratic) in outlook.

The contributors to this volume, Radio veterans and historians alike, have provided a wealth of detail on the impact of Western broadcasts in the USSR and Eastern Europe during the Cold War. The stations reached mass audiences, as documented by traveler surveys at the time and confirmed now by evidence from declassified Communist archives and surveys conducted within the target countries after the fall of communism. They reached key elites, both within the Communist regimes and among their opponents, partly thanks to the credibility and relevance of the broadcasts, and partly due to government mechanisms that allowed for public funding and oversight, while ensuring management autonomy and journalistic independence. This unique set of circumstances aligned to form a historical conjuncture in which Western broadcasting contributed to fostering democratic change within the countries of Eastern Europe and the USSR.

I.

Regime Perceptions of Western Broadcasters

I.

Regime Perceptions of Western Broadcasters

Bulgaria

Document No. 1: 1977. Interior Ministry Analysis of Foreign Propaganda against Bulgaria

This document provides a detailed content analysis of the programs of individual Western broadcasters. It indicates particular sensitivity to broadcasts on Helsinki-related human rights issues, to the use of recent defectors with inside knowledge, and to RFE's focus on domestic issues.

[Excerpt]

In 1977 the hostile propaganda against the People's Republic of Bulgaria remained almost unchanged in terms of quantity. The broadcasts in the Bulgarian language continued from 10 radio stations from the capitalist countries and 5 from the SFRY [Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia], Albania and China, with a total duration of about 20 hours per day. A certain increase of anti-Soviet propaganda can be observed in the press in England, Austria, Greece and Turkey. Similar materials, though sporadically, have appeared also in printed publications in Italy, France, the USA, Turkey, China, Albania, Mexico, Belgium and other countries. [...]

By using the documents from Helsinki as "law" and "legal basis" for the involvement in the internal affairs of the fraternal countries, our ideological adversaries have undertaken an unprecedented total campaign for "human rights" and for "free exchange of people, ideas and information." The ultimate goal of this extremely strong and large-scale propaganda

pressure is the implementation of Brzezinski's doctrine of "symmetry" in détente or, in other words, the creation of a legal opposition in the countries of the socialist community and the impositions of the norms of bourgeois viewpoints and law. In their capacity as "independent sources of objective information" the subversive Liberty and Free Europe radio stations are exerting huge efforts to assert the role of the USA as "the arbiter of good and evil and the moral policeman of the world," as the *United States News and World Report* magazine wrote complacently in March.

After this general description of the organization, content and direction of the hostile propaganda, let us see what the relative segmentation of the various radio stations is with regard to the treatment of the most exploited topics—anti-Sovietism, "human rights" and "anti-Communism."

The BBC radio station has been the most active in the preparation and broadcasting of materials of anti-Soviet character of a constantly increasing number. At the end of the year, the broadcasts on this topic reached 36% in the various programs. The fact that BBC is an official governmental radio station did not prevent its employees from resorting to the services of P. Semerdjiev with the series of comments "Who was Traycho Kostov?" and of the "fresh reinforcements" consisting of Vladimir and Natalia Kostov, through the broadcasting of the interviews with them. Human rights and anti-Communism formed 26% and 18% of their broadcasts, respectively.

The Voice of America radio station has commemorated the first anniversary of the coming to office of the Carter Administration with a record of the materials on human rights throughout the fourth quarter, amounting to 36%. The range of the reasons used for the purposes of this "moralizing mission" was extremely broad—beginning with the dissidents and finishing with the SALT II talks. A certain decrease in propaganda noise about human rights in the broadcasting of the radio station was observed during the second quarter, when as a result of the constructive, but firm opposition of the USSR and the progressive and rationally thinking forces all over the world, a certain sobriety appeared in the activities of the Carter administration. This drop was compensated by the considerable increase of the materials related to the holding of the Belgrade Summit, in which human rights were treated in the programs of The Voice of America exclusively though the prism of anti-Sovietism. In this way, Soviet coverage has increased from zero at the beginning of the year, to 26% at its

end. Anti-Communism was exploited within the average limits of 12% per year, which is normal for the radio station.

A relatively even distribution of the materials in terms of content and direction can be observed in the broadcasts of Deutsche Welle. The exception was only for the first quarter, when in the general campaign against real socialism, the topic of human rights had reached 35%, and anti-Sovietism and anti-Communism decreased respectively to 2 and 4%. The inclusion in the broadcasts of lectures by G. Markov and interviews with V. Kostov restored the parity, and the relative segmentation of the various topics in the emissions of Deutsche Welle was distributed as follows: anti-Sovietism 19%, anti-Communism 20%, and human rights 22%.

A characteristic of the broadcasts of the BBC, The Voice of America and Deutsche Welle was that materials with a direct anti-Bulgarian slant usually do not exceed 10–15%. This enables us to see more clearly the general direction of the bourgeois and revisionist propaganda against real socialism, which can be seen most clearly in the relative segmentation of the various materials in the broadcasts of the three radio stations: human rights 24%, anti-Sovietism and attacks against real socialism 18% each, and anti-Communism 15%.

In general, Radio Free Europe also possesses the above-mentioned characteristics, but the majority of its broadcasts have a specific anti-Bulgarian direction. This radio station continues to be the main, most dangerous and active hostile propaganda center against the USSR and the People's Republic of Bulgaria. This is demonstrated by the analysis of its broadcasts (the data cited are the annual average).

Radio Free Europe pays most of its attention to attempts to discredit the activity of the Bulgarian Communist Party in consolidating the principles of proletarian internationalism, the purity of Marxist-Leninist doctrine and its leading role in various areas of social and political life. In order to achieve their goals, the employees of the radio station shamelessly libeled and slandered the activities and contributions of Georgi Dimitrov in the rudest of ways. 24% of the broadcasts of Free Europe, many of which almost amount to outright instigation, attempt to incite discontent and resistance against the Party, the Komsomol and the organs of the Ministry of Interior.

A constantly increasing segment of the broadcasting is made up of the programs directed against the socialist way of life. They emphasize individual weaknesses, which are presented as insoluble within the framework of the socialist social order. The employees of the radio station speculate on the shortcomings of some of our citizens and try to convince their

listeners that privileges, lack of principles and corruption are inherent in socialism. The broadcasts on this topic have already reached 24% and, given the persistence and pace at which they increase, it is likely that next year they will hold the central place in the programs of Free Europe.

The third of the most exploited topics is related to the activities and policies of the Party and the government in the area of foreign and domestic politics. The various attempts to discredit and denigrate them before the broad public opinion account for 18% of the broadcasts and have been relatively equally distributed throughout the whole year. For these purposes, the massive domestic and foreign initiatives which took place in our country, as well as some changes in the Party and state apparatus, were actively used.

In a more limited number, but more constantly, the emissions of Free Europe presented in a negative light issues of our economy and culture, Bulgarian-Soviet friendship and the application of the Helsinki Accords. Throughout the year their relative proportion was 10, 9, 8 and 6%, respectively. The bottom line of all of these was the claim that our friendship with the great Soviet Union will lead, and in some areas has already led, to the loss of the national identity of Bulgaria and its subjugation to ideas, lifestyle and culture which are alien to our nation. The re-orientation of the People's Republic of Bulgaria towards the West is being presented as a solution to this problem.

Although it was in less than 1% of the broadcasts throughout the year, the employees of Free Europe have periodically raised questions about the national policy of our country towards the neighboring peoples and their minorities in our country.

In the so-called distribution of topics in the broadcasts of the Radio Free Europe, materials directly addressed towards various social groups and strata did not exceed 10%, but increased attention to young people and the intelligentsia was obvious in almost all of the emissions.

In accordance with the common efforts of the enemy propaganda, the radio station made a contribution to undermining the progressive youth organizations, and attempted to inculcate a conviction in the young people of Bulgaria that specific measures had to be taken for the creation of youth and especially student organizations, which had to be "independent" from the Party.

As concerns the intelligentsia, Free Europe constantly increases its efforts to provoke and activate those artists and scientists from among the circles of the artistic and creative intelligentsia, and the scientific and

technical intelligentsia, who sustain unsound positions, in an attempt to create dissident groups around them. As a catalyst of the long-expected reaction, the employees of the radio station used “civic courage and irreconcilability,” as well as the hostile acts of “dissidents” and other anti-socialist elements in the CSSR, Poland, the GDR and the USSR.

As usual until now, the main sources for the preparation of the programs of Radio Free Europe have been the publications of the Bulgarian daily and periodical press, interpreted in accordance with the goals and tasks of subversive propaganda. A number of “brains” stand out in this activity, among which a certain division of labor exists: Dimitar Bochev—dealing with the socialist way of life and the problems of the young generation, Nikolay Pavlov—social and ethical problems of the socialist way of life, Vassil Petrov and Nikola Kamenov—problems of the economy, Boris Bossilkov and Doushko Petrov—literature, religion and philosophical-ideological problems. New names started appearing during the second half of the year, such as Sergey Hristov and St. Popov.

Special attention has to be paid to the most active group of defectors—Georgi Markov, Petar Semerdjiev and Vladimir and Natalia Kostov. Their lectures and interviews are being widely used by Free Europe, Deutsche Welle and BBC. By pretending to have independent and impartial standpoints that defend the national interests of Bulgaria, they criticize and slander everything and everybody related to Bulgarian-Soviet friendship and the building of our socialist Motherland. Their materials are written from the viewpoint of open and rude anti-Sovietism. P. Semerdjiev has even prepared a special series “Bulgaria, Russia and the Soviet Union,” with the purpose of libeling and slandering the relations between our countries. What is more, V. Kostov tried to provide a reason for the necessity of the existence of Free Europe as a channel through which the citizens of the socialist countries are able to receive free and credible information in the spirit of Helsinki. In support of this, Vladimir and Natalia Kostov claim in their lectures that the Bulgarians are being served one-sided information that suits the Party, and that this helps a handful of Party and state leaders in the service of the USSR to impose Bulgarian-Soviet friendship, which is nothing more than an empty slogan without any real meaning to the regular Bulgarian citizen.

Source: Bulgarian Interior Ministry Archive, Fond 22, Record 1, Document 65. Obtained by Jordan Baev. Translated by Miroslav Vajarov.

Document No. 2: 1986. Interior Ministry Report on the Staff
of the Bulgarian Service of RFE

A collaborator of the Bulgarian intelligence service provided detailed information on the personnel situation within the RFE Bulgarian Service.

[Excerpt]

MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR SIXTH DIRECTORATE
OF STATE SECURITY

Top Secret!

In relation to the performance of the measures of the joint plan with the 5th Directorate of KGB and in coordination with State Security, agent "Ivanovski" was sent on a trip to West Berlin and the Federal Republic of Germany. From March 1 through 4 this year he stayed with his acquaintances in Munich, where he acquired the following significant information:

Currently the atmosphere in the Bulgarian section of Radio Free Europe is very tense, as all of its employees are complaining of being in a state of stress due to the permanent suspicion and doubts of the presence of "spies" from Bulgaria among them. A division into groups and camps, old and young, etc. is said to exist among them. The problem of filling the staff with people of high professional level still remains unsolved, since it is difficult to find defectors among the good Bulgarian journalists and writers. Nowadays the section is said to employ [only] hostile Bulgarian emigrants, who lack the necessary qualities and are unprepared.

In order to give a chance for work to all applicants, the management of the section decided to compensate any of the old staff who were willing to retire with a one-time amount of 200,000 DM. Besides this, it undertook the commitment to pay monthly pension installments, in case the years of work happened to be insufficient for [the required] length of service.

[The report continues with descriptions and gossip about the work and personal lives of fourteen members of the Bulgarian Service.]

The audience and employees of the Bulgarian section of Radio Free Europe are said to have commented with dissatisfaction on the fact that, unlike some of the other socialist countries, the standard of living in Bulgaria is constantly on the rise. The import and export issues have been solved in an especially reasonable manner, which allows for the reduction of Bulgaria's obligation to the West. A lot has been said about the "unequal opportunities" for different categories of citizens in our country. This is one of the topics on which they will count in the future to attract more listeners.

The Bavarian government has concluded an agreement with the management of Free Europe to convert the building of the radio into a city hospital, after the radio ceases its activities.

A copy of the data obtained will be sent to the First Main Directorate of State Security.

HEAD OF SIXTH DIRECTORATE OF STATE SECURITY

Lieutenant-general: (sign.)

/P. Stoyanov/

Source: Bulgarian Interior Ministry Archive. Fond 22, Record 1, Document 237. Obtained by Jordan Baev. Translated by Miroslav Vajarov.

Document No. 3: 1989. Bulgarian Politburo Discussion on RFE Monitoring Reports

This extract from a Politburo discussion indicates the attention paid to monitoring Western broadcasts for the top Party elite and Party leader Zhivkov's impatience with the regime monitors' focus on RFE broadcasts.

[Excerpt]

Strictly confidential!
Stenographic record

Meeting

OF THE POLITBURO OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE BULGARIAN COMMUNIST PARTY

6 June 1989

TODOR ZHIVKOV:

Comrades,

I asked to meet in order to clarify some issues with regard to the situation in the country. I don't intend to draw a balance-sheet, since we have not spoken about that. We are going to go back to the revival process [i.e. campaign against ethnic Turks in Bulgaria], we will make an assessment in order to see what we need to do and so on.

What is the main thing? The main thing is that we rightly came up with this exposition in front of the Bulgarian television and radio. It created, on the whole, a patriotic, Bulgarian, national surge, which we haven't had in decades. That is one success...

PETAR MLADENOV:

I think that the statement of comrade Zhivkov was one of the biggest moves since I have been engaged in politics and since I have been here.

Secondly, in terms of internal affairs, he *de facto* stopped certain negative processes which have been developing in Bulgaria. With regard to external affairs we went on the offensive. I have to tell you that Bulgaria is in no way isolated and its influence is in no way less than it was before. [...]

YORDAN YOTOV [CC secretary responsible for ideological issues]:

Why do I say that? Because we receive information every day. No one spares us the facts, but rather presents them as they are, sometimes exaggerated and so on. The main source of information for Bulgaria, which the comrades give us each day, is [Radio] Free Europe. I cannot understand why each day they [the department monitoring foreign radio broadcasts] have to shove us a stack of what Vladimir Kostov or Rumi-ana Uzunova has said. We have to understand that these are paid agents. Supply us other information. There are other radio stations. Let them gather information from the BBC. What does the Voice of America say? These are also enemy radio stations.

TODOR ZHIVKOV:

Comrade Yotov, spare us this information, we don't have time.

PETAR MLADENOV:

That [flow of information], when it cannot be compared against everything that goes on in the world, deforms the mind and it appears as though the entire world is preoccupied with Bulgaria. That [information] is being transmitted in Bulgarian only. It is especially prepared for Bulgaria. It is not broadcast in German, English, [or] French. When I was in Paris, *Le Monde* wrote one sentence on Bulgaria.

I think that the information [prepared] for us should be a little bit different. Let those who deal with propaganda read everything, but we should be given more authentic information. There arises an untruthful notion of how Bulgaria is positioned [internationally]. These [radio monitoring] bulletins are read by many people and an incorrect idea is being created about how Bulgaria is being presented to the world.

TODOR ZHIVKOV:

That which you give should be abbreviated. Are we going to live with Free Europe only?

SOURCE: CENTRAL STATE ARCHIVE [TsDA], SOFIA, FOND I-B, OPIS 68, CC BCP Politburo Protocol No. 105 of 6 June 1989, 27–28. Obtained by Jordan Baev. Translated by Kristina N. Terzieva.

German Democratic Republic

Document No. 4: 1970. Stasi Report on West German Government's Attitude to RFE and RL

This GDR intelligence report, based on information from SPD officials in Bonn, describes the concern of Brandt Government officials about the continued operation of RFE and RL in Germany, and claims that some officials would conditionally welcome Soviet bloc pressure on this issue.

Ministry of State Security
Berlin, 23 September 1970

No. 993/70

According to a reliable source, the attitude of the Federal Government towards the afore-mentioned stations was described by leading SPD officials at the beginning of September 1970 as follows:

The attacks by the Soviet Union, the GDR and some other socialist countries against the activities of the stations are harsh, and they could call into question the Olympic Games. The Federal Government is aware from various, not just official, sources that some of the socialist countries are relatively serious in their threat to boycott the Olympic Games in Munich if the stations do not terminate their activities.

The Federal Government is in a difficult situation on this issue, because it cannot afford to antagonize the Americans, who are running these stations. On the other hand it is not necessarily uncomfortable for

the Federal Government to see mounting pressure from the East against the activities of the stations, as this would open certain possibilities for the Federal Government to raise this issue with the Americans and suggest that the stations might work from outside the Federal Republic. The current situation is that the Federal Government has recently extended the contractual licenses for both stations under pressure from the Americans. The contractual licenses are valid for 2 years, and can be cancelled at the earliest after one year, with a year's notice. This means that the stations would be still active by the time of the 1972 Olympic Games. The Federal Government is at the moment not in a position to do anything against the activities of the stations.

This assessment was confirmed by the *Bundespost* [Federal Post Office], which however pointed out that besides the broadcasting license, which is granted by the Foreign Ministry, there is also a technical license. This technical license, which regulates the use of frequencies, is granted by the *Bundespost*. It is not attached to longer-term contracts, but can be cancelled with six months' notice. The next possible date for cancellation is 31 December 1970, with a deadline [for terminating operations] at the end of June 1971. Withdrawing the technical license is thus a possible way of cutting off the activities of the stations at an earlier date than though the license awarded by the Foreign Ministry.

From SPD circles it was stated in this regard that this situation opened up a new perspective. It was hoped that, at the next frequency conference, the frequencies used by the two stations for the Federal Republic could be cancelled under pressure from the East bloc countries, possibly even from the neutral countries. In any case, it would not necessarily be uncomfortable for the Federal Government if a solution could be found that was bearable for the Federal Government.

Due to security concerns regarding this source, this information cannot be publicized.

Source: BStU, Berlin, MfS HAXX ZMA 914. Obtained by A. Ross Johnson. Translated by Christian Ostermann.

Hungary

Document No. 5: 1973. Report to Politburo and Politburo Resolution on Fight against “Imperialist Propaganda”

This Central Committee report to the Hungarian Politburo reviews efforts of Party and government organs to analyze Western broadcasting and other information programs targeted on Hungary. The report indicates the extent of the resources devoted to analyzing “hostile” information programs, criticizes as inadequate the efforts to counter “hostile propaganda” claiming to “improve socialism,” and urges better coordination of counterpropaganda. The resolution of the Politburo accepting the report follows.

[Report to Politburo]
May 22, 1973.

I.

1. Regular monitoring and evaluation of hostile propaganda targeting our country have been conducted by the Central Committee since the third quarter of 1969 on the basis of the resolution of the Politburo [establishing the Department of Propaganda of the Central Committee]. Since that time 15 quarterly reports and 5 thematic evaluations have been prepared. The materials are prepared by the so-called Evaluation Committee that works as a body coordinated by the Department of Propaganda of the Central Committee. The Evaluation Committee is made up of members representing the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Department of Public Administration, the Department of Science, Culture and Public Education of the Central Committee, and also includes representatives of the

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of the Interior, the Hungarian Press Agency, the Institute of Foreign Affairs and Hungarian Radio. The six state bodies mentioned above analyze hostile propaganda in their own field and provide their own reports, which then make up the final report. This final report is sent to the members of the Politburo and the Secretariat, the heads of departments of the Central Committee and the leaders of the state organs concerned.

This work has become an integral part of the political activities of the above-mentioned bodies, constituting an established system today. It is especially the reports prepared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Hungarian Press Agency, the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of the Interior that show clear signs of regular data collection and deep analysis. The Hungarian Radio and the Institute of Foreign Affairs have been able to find the most suitable method only recently.

The evaluation in these reports is aimed at pointing out the main tendencies and changes. Therefore they can provide the political leadership with useful quarterly summaries concerning hostile propaganda and at the same time call attention to possible tactical changes, based on the comparison of data in recent and earlier reports. The reports also provide good grounds for drawing the necessary conclusions.

However, one shortcoming of these reports is that the collection of data is not comprehensive enough (it does not even utilize fully the technical capacity of the monitoring station installed in Gödöllő), and the analyses are not deep enough. They often fail to show how the division of labor is managed by the various outlets of hostile propaganda, they do not call attention to the characteristic features of bourgeois propaganda that influence the various classes and layers of society—especially the youth—and they do not investigate thoroughly how the policy of undermining conveyed by this propaganda affects the area of tourism. The level of synthesizing work is not satisfactory. Several of the bodies concerned are still trying to find the most suitable methods to participate in the analysis of hostile propaganda, and they replace their representatives engaged in such work too often. Most of the real work is done at the end of each quarter, it is not operative enough, and there are very few evaluations prepared in between the quarterly reports.

2. The main goal of the analysis of hostile propaganda has so far been to provide information for the leaders of the Party and the state. As a result, information flow has been directed upwards and we have failed to devote adequate attention to two important tasks: providing informa-

tion for the lower Party organizations, which should be somewhat different from the reports sent to the highest leadership, and utilizing the experience gained through our fight against hostile propaganda in our political work, especially in our own propaganda activities.

3. Our fraternal Parties show a genuine interest in learning more about our experience in the evaluation of hostile propaganda. For instance, the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party has ordered the Counselor of the Soviet embassy in Budapest to gather information from the Central Committee about our quarterly evaluation reports. Similar regular information is provided to the German Socialist Unity Party, and Polish and Bulgarian diplomats are given occasional information. It would be practical, however, to send our fraternal Parties a bi-annual report and request a similar evaluation from them.

II.

1. The main methodological and substantive experience gained through nearly four years of evaluation work shows that the hostile propaganda targeting our country intends to achieve the same goals by adapting methods and tools to the conditions of peaceful coexistence and the ongoing ideological fight. This propaganda is less sharp in its tone today but much more extensive in its scope.

Some of the methodological and substantive changes can be demonstrated by the following:

- It was a striking feature of the period in question that hostile propaganda was not trying to incite the people directly to overthrow the system instantly. It took great pains to be viewed as an opposition rather than an outsider or an enemy. It criticized the system from the inside, so its tone pretended to be more “loyal.” It intended to relate very closely to the everyday problems of our public life, to exaggerate our troubles, and to support its messages by referring to facts and events of our daily life. These endeavors are manifest, e.g. in its intention to incite dissatisfaction towards the policy of the Party, to attack the leading role of the Party, to turn the various classes and layers of society against each other, and to extol apolitical technocracy. It also tries hard to frustrate our endeavors by trying to push our policy to the right, e.g. urging capitalist reforms in the economy, and liberalizing reforms in extending socialist democracy.

- Open, anti-Communist propaganda is more and more often replaced by campaigns heralding the “improvement” of socialism in which important issues of Marxism are also discussed, often using Marxist terminology. At the same time it frequently propagates so-called new models of socialism, overemphasizes the importance of the divergent national features of socialist development, incites nationalism and turns the socialist countries against each other. It also maintains—often with an openly anti-Soviet tone—that there exists a so-called Hungarian model.
- Foreign propaganda also paints a distorted picture of the domestic situation by setting domestic and foreign policy sharply against each other. It suggests that Hungary can continue to conduct its liberal, reformist domestic policy at the expense of an orthodox, Soviet-friendly foreign policy. It recommends the same to other socialist countries too. In this context its aim is to instigate distrust among our allies. Even the cooked-up potential clash between the “conservatives” and the “reformists” is represented as a proof of the instability of the socialist system. It talked about a “Hungarian dilemma,” a “crisis in the leadership,” and when—after the November [1972] Central Committee meeting—the desired “disintegration” did not materialize, it started speaking about “a tightening in domestic policy,” “shifting the goals,” and “putting the brakes on reforms.” It sticks to the same attitude even today. At the same time it carefully takes stock of the tactical situation, which is illustrated by its reaction to the events of March 15 or to the [anti-regime demonstrations] that took place in Balassagyarmat. It is also to be noted that it speaks differently about Hungary to the audience in capitalist countries than to the Hungarian audience.
- Within nationalist incitement, the main goal of the propaganda has become to instigate anti-Soviet sentiments and to break away from the Soviet Union. A standard topic of this propaganda is “Soviet pressure” on our domestic policy, “distrust on the part of Moscow,” the “super-power interests of the Soviet Union,” and the “Brezhnev doctrine,” as far as foreign affairs are concerned. It urges challenging this doctrine, and cites Romanian foreign policy as an example. It describes the advantages of a possible stronger orientation towards the West and Hungary’s ability to “play the role of a bridge.” The fact that most of the propaganda broadcasts to Hungary talk about the internal situation of other socialist countries, especially the Soviet Union, also demonstrates that the main goal is to set us against our allies.

- Imperialist propaganda pays increasingly more lip service to ultra-leftist views. It uses Maoist and Trotskyist “new leftist” ideas to demonstrate the “internal crisis of socialism” and attempts to exploit the conflicts in the international labor movement by exaggerating and sharpening them to an extreme degree. It encourages openly or potentially anti-socialist trends, various extremist groups, and the pluralism of Marxism.
- Utilizing the potentials of wide-ranging contacts between the East and the West, it creates a lot of illusions about the capitalist system and Western lifestyle, and promotes the system of values prevalent in the capitalist world. The changes that have taken place in the policy of some capitalist countries as a result of the changes in the balance of power are presented as if the nature of capitalist policy itself had changed, thereby giving rise to illusions about certain countries or politicians. This propaganda does everything it can to make the bourgeois mass media more appealing to a growing number of people.

2. The reasons for the changes in the content and methodology of hostile propaganda:

- the achievements of our domestic and foreign policy and the strengthened position of socialism which shattered any hope for a direct overthrow of the socialist system;
- the general crisis of the capitalist world, and the decrease in its appeal that has resulted from this crisis;
- accommodation to the tactics of undermining and selective gap-bridging;
- social changes in our country and the recognition of the developing socialist mentality;
- utilization of the potential for wide-ranging contacts between Hungary and the capitalist world.

3. Among the various tools of imperialist propaganda, the mass media continue to try to expand the range of people who tune in to their programs, especially by playing the role of acceptable and trustworthy channels of information. Though their messages are essentially the same, there appears to be a certain division of labor among them. For instance, certain things that the [Voice of America] is reluctant to say, for political reasons, are conveyed through the BBC or Radio Free Europe.

In addition to the mass media, an increasingly important role is played by the propaganda conveyed through cultural relations. The embassies of developed capitalist countries are becoming more and more active, and occasionally we also witness the propaganda activities of the right-wing emigration. Hostile propaganda makes use of the potential of tourism by training Western tourists visiting our country, as well as by trying to exert an influence on Hungarian tourists visiting [Western] countries.

The tools used by imperialist propaganda have undergone intensive modernization. The United States is already planning to introduce the use of satellites to broadcast television programs to socialist countries, and the Federal Republic of Germany is going to install new, high-capacity radio stations.

4. The evaluation of hostile propaganda targeting our country is an extremely complex task. Our society is constantly exposed to a wide range of concurrent effects. When weighing the impact of bourgeois propaganda, our essential starting point is that Hungarian public opinion is largely influenced by the achievements of socialist development and the major elements of socialist public thinking. However, we should not ignore—and overestimate or underestimate—the impact of bourgeois propaganda.

Bourgeois propaganda can achieve some results in issues related to certain internal tensions or problems in the country. For instance it has tried to create uncertainty and raise concern over the future of our economic reforms and the correctness of our foreign policy. This propaganda also makes use of the weaknesses of our information policy. For instance, it wasted no time grasping the opportunity that arose when we were silent about the Vienna [arms control] negotiations for quite a long time.

Its impact can be observed in three areas:

- Some unfavorable features of public sentiment and attitude—nationalism, cynicism, adoration of the West, disparagement of the achievements of the socialist countries—can partly be attributed to the impact of Western propaganda;
- Hostile influence occasionally shows itself by providing misleading information for the people;
- Imperialist propaganda—as a major tool of ideological subversion—disseminates bourgeois ideas, conserves and revives bourgeois ideology.

This impact can be explained by more intensive contacts between the two world systems, the ideological situation in our country, and our objective difficulties and subjective mistakes. The weak points of our work play an important role in its success: the shortcomings of our analyses and the failure to utilize our past experience. For this reason, priority should be given to a more offensive and active fight against hostile propaganda in the proper framework, in addition to the ongoing evaluative and reporting activities.

* * *

[Politburo resolution]

1. The Politburo accepts the report. It states that the system of analyzing hostile propaganda has been established on the basis of the resolution of the Politburo and fulfills its tasks.

2. It is the achievements of socialist development and the main aspects of socialist public thinking that play the most decisive role in shaping Hungarian public opinion. The fight against hostile propaganda—due to earlier Party resolutions—has become more lively, argumentative, polemical and sophisticated. The organs of the mass media have played a key role in this development both at home and abroad. However, due to the change in the balance of power, the easing of tension, and the widening range of contacts between the two world systems we expect that the ideological fight will sharpen, and hostile propaganda and bourgeois ideological subversion will intensify.

3. The fight against bourgeois propaganda is part of our entire political and ideological work. We need to counter the effects of this propaganda by representing and convincingly arguing for our achievements, ideas and values, and by providing creative responses to questions raised in real life. Our work cannot be restricted to merely rejecting bourgeois propaganda, and the fight should be fought from an offensive, positive position rather than from a defensive stand, using every tool that is offered by our domestic policy and by the propaganda campaigns targeting foreign countries.

In addition to the press and the radio we should make better use of the television as a tool, provide verbal information for members and non-members of the Party, and utilize political training and the mass organi-

zations and movements so that our people can be amply protected both ideologically and politically against hostile propaganda.

Investigations should be conducted as to how efficient our political and propaganda work is among the emigrants living in Western countries. Efforts should be made to exert an influence on the intelligentsia of capitalist countries (especially in Western Europe) that shape public opinion by means of high-quality publications (newspapers, books, scientific studies, etc.).

4. With regard to the main lines of the offensive of hostile propaganda, our political work lays emphasis on the following aspects at this stage:

- The permanent and changing elements of our policy constitute unity; they cannot be set into any opposition.
- The socialist nature of our society is getting stronger in every area; the socialist elements of public thinking are constantly increasing.
- The relationship between the Party and the people is good and is based on confidence; the domestic political situation is stable.
- We rely on cooperation and firm unity with the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries based on firm principles so that we can serve our national and international interests and protect our security and sovereignty; the Hungarian-Soviet friendship is unbroken.
- Peaceful coexistence between countries with a different social system means cooperation as well as fighting at the same time. We are ready to act against any shortsighted, sectarian isolation but will never allow the ideological differences to be obscured, nor make any concession to anti-Marxist views.
- We endorse the exchange of cultural values between nations living under different social systems, and promote the expansion of tourism and information flow, but reject any endeavors that are based on the principles and practice of the cold war and the false theory of the free flow of information and ideas.
- With regard to developments in tourism, we stress the importance of state discipline, responsibility and the obligations of our citizens, and we will firmly hold our citizens accountable for their behavior both at home and abroad.

5. In order to strengthen our fight against hostile propaganda, we intend to accomplish the following:

a) establish a more coordinated and operative system of monitoring and analysis followed by drawing the necessary conclusions. The observations made at different places should all be used for the preparation of coordinated reports that include every possible aspects of monitoring work.

The various departments of the Central Committee that take part in the analysis should summarize their work and ensure that their results are utilized in the reports in a systematic way. In the future the State Office of Church Affairs and the National Information Council should also prepare reports on any hostile propaganda efforts that can be observed in their sphere of activity, and if needed, other state and social bodies and organization should do the same concerning their experience in this respect.

More thematic evaluations should be prepared in relation to certain important events. The bodies concerned should investigate the activities of hostile propaganda targeting the various classes and layers of our society, with special attention to the bourgeois propaganda targeting our young people. The analyses should investigate how the division of labor works between the various outlets of bourgeois propaganda (e.g. radio stations) and what sort of other tools this propaganda intends to utilize in addition to the outlets of mass media: tourism, relations with emigrants, propaganda among the national minorities.

The quarterly reports should be continued, but it is also important to process the incoming reports and any other information on a daily basis. To that end, the monitoring of hostile radio broadcasts should also be developed. The personnel problem that hinders the full utilization of the monitoring radio station in Gödöllő should be promptly resolved. The full content of monitoring should be sent to the Hungarian Institute of Foreign Affairs. This Institute should be turned into the scientific center of the long-term analysis of hostile propaganda.

The information materials concerning hostile propaganda emanating from different sources should be coordinated, such as the press reviews prepared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the confidential materials of the Hungarian Press Agency and the various reports that process the materials published in the newspapers of the Hungarian emigration.

b) The experience gained from the analyses should be used more effectively in our domestic political work and foreign propaganda. By unveiling the slanders and false statements we should deprive bourgeois propaganda of its credibility. We should do our best to exert an influence on the public opinion of the capitalist countries by presenting our own

arguments and facts. In the meantime we should be aware of the danger of letting the enemy decide what questions and issues should be raised in our work. We should generally refrain from direct disputes and engage in arguments only if it is justified by our political interests.

Taking into consideration all the experience gained through the analysis of hostile propaganda and building on the quarterly reports made for the leading bodies, we should prepare materials which contain data, arguments and facts that can be used to refute any falsification and assist the fight against hostile propaganda and send them to lower-level Party organizations through existing information channels.

Regular recommendations should be made as to what sort of tasks should be performed in our political work in order to counter the effects of hostile propaganda effectively. We should specify concrete tasks in this respect for the mass media organizations working at home and addressing a foreign audience.

The special tasks of each relevant area (such as tourism, political work concerning the emigrants, the national minorities, etc.) should be regularly analyzed in the fight against hostile propaganda.

The Institute of Social Studies should take an active part in the analysis of hostile propaganda and point out the relationship between the bourgeois ideological subversion and this propaganda in its research studies and reports.

c) We should expand our cooperation with our fraternal Parties. This should be achieved gradually, in a sensitive manner, through bilateral negotiations with each Party. We should offer the option to the Parties of all the European socialist countries (except for Albania) that, in addition to the use of our existing channels for the exchange of information verbally, we are ready to send them a written bi-annual report on our experience with hostile propaganda. We should also urge similar cooperation with those of our Western fraternal Parties in whose countries hostile propaganda against our country is very sharp (Italian Communist Party, French Communist Party, German Communist Party, the Communist Party of the US, Austrian Communist Party).

6. The Politburo proposes that the Propaganda Committee should review the system and methods of the press-administration involved in countering the effects of hostile propaganda and take a position on its modernization.

7. The Politburo deems it necessary to establish a new political post at the Department of Propaganda of the Central Committee with the function of implementing the provisions of the resolution and coordinate the analysis of hostile propaganda.

Source: MOL 288 f. 5/611 ő. E. – Printed copy. This resolution, adopted on May 22, 1973, was declared invalid ten years later by a resolution made on October 11, 1983. Obtained by Csaba Békés. Translated by András Bocz.

Document No. 6: 1978. Hungarian Central Committee Discusses Implementation of 1973 Resolution

Report on the implementation of the Politburo resolution of May 22, 1973 (see above), concerning the need to strengthen the fight against "imperialist propaganda" (especially its emphasis on human rights) and proposals for future tasks (including concern with projected Western satellite television broadcasts).

[The report was discussed by the Secretariat at its meeting of December 4, 1978]

I.

The imperialist propaganda that has been targeting our country during the five years since the Politburo made a resolution on strengthening the fight against imperialist propaganda at its May 22, 1973 meeting has not changed substantially in its basic goals and main line. Most of its efforts are still focused on attacking the socialist system from the outside while trying to undermine it internally. At the same time it incites anti-Soviet sentiment, tries to turn the people against the other socialist countries and our fraternal Parties, and gives rise to illusions about capitalism. The hostile propaganda that aims to exert an influence on Hungarian public opinion is no different in a strategic sense from the imperialist propaganda that targets the other socialist countries.

However, the propaganda campaign of imperialism has found itself under new circumstances, both due to our internal development and as a result of geopolitical changes in world politics. International ideological fighting has received priority and become more complex. The imperialist power centers have decided to intensify their anti-socialist propaganda and the ideological tension between the two world systems. On certain issues—such as issues of human rights and democracy—they have even managed to take the initiative temporarily. The propaganda offensive that has emerged recently cannot be traced back to the endeavors of some capitalist circles only, or to the transitional functioning of a particular government. What we should expect is that the offensive behavior of the imperialist propaganda centers will remain a lasting component of the struggle between the two world systems.

II.

There have been significant tactical changes in the imperialist propaganda targeting our country—while the strategic goals are still maintained—as a result of the simultaneous impact of changing internal and external conditions of the ideological fight. The essence of these changes can be summarized as follows: the propaganda campaign has become more complex in its content, more extensive, more versatile in its methods and more focused in using various tools. It paints a very distinct picture of Hungary, giving a semblance of a country which “maintains a system that is more acceptable than that of the other socialist countries, distancing herself from the Soviet model.”

The hostile propaganda campaign attacking Hungary relies heavily on the everyday problems of the people, practically “building on” the practice of developing socialism and its existing conflicts. The propaganda campaign that was initiated in relation to the so-called new Hungarian model in our economic management system has gradually been extended to all aspects of domestic policy, using it as a tool to set our country against the rest of the socialist countries. The bourgeois propaganda centers take great pains to make it appear as if they were the true representatives of the interests of our people.

These endeavors manifest themselves mostly in the campaign concerning human rights and national minority issues. Our country is not the main target of the campaign that was launched on the pretext of safeguarding human rights, but recently it has become more intense even in relation to Hungary. Nationalist incitement has intensified in the ethnic minority issue, because this area is regarded by imperialist propaganda as the most suitable to turn part of the people against the policy of the Party and incite conflicts among the socialist countries. These hostile propaganda centers are also busy working on establishing an opposition in Hungary. They want to argue that the Hungarian opposition is also part of the “Central European opposition movement.” As a result of the stable internal situation and the political decisions made in concrete cases this imperialist propaganda has not been able to fulfill its expectations. It is quite likely though that it will try to make the most of our economic problems in widening the scope of those who could act as the opposition to our socialist system.

The imperialist propaganda organizations have undergone several structural changes in the past few years. In order to enhance their effi-

ciency, they intend to direct all their tools on this aim, on the one hand, and they intend to introduce new methods, on the other.

As a new feature, the hostile radio stations broadcasting in Hungarian do their best to get official recognition in Hungary. Radio Free Europe announced that it would be willing to air critical opinions of its own programs.

There is a new development in the area of radio propaganda. The Radio of Beijing has started a Hungarian language program speaking sharply against the Soviet Union and détente, though poor technical conditions make the reception of its broadcasts difficult for the time being.

As far as propaganda through television is concerned, the United States is currently broadcasting experimental programs through satellites. This means that within a few years Western television programs will probably be received easily in the socialist countries, including our country too.

III.

The hostile propaganda, which mainly targets the intelligentsia, young people, the lower middle-class and those with a *petit bourgeois* mentality, cannot influence public opinion, political thinking and the frame of mind of the people in the country in any significant way. Hungarian public opinion is largely shaped by the results of socialist development, the policy of our Party, and the constantly strengthening elements of socialist public thinking.

The decrease in the listening rate of the programs of Radio Free Europe, and in general, Western radio broadcasts, is due—in addition to the stable political situation in Hungary—to the fact that the work of [our own] mass media is much more efficient and up-to-date, and the level of providing information for the people has improved significantly. However, the viewing and listening rate to hostile radio stations and television programs that can be received easily in the Western and Southern parts of the country may temporarily increase in relation to some domestic or international events that are ignored by the national mass media for some reason, or to which their reaction is subdued and tardy.

Wrinkles in socialist awareness, a still existing instinctive sentiment, remnants of bourgeois views and habits and their reproduction, occasional instances of intensifying individualism and acts and behaviors that violate the norms of socialist morals all create potentially favorable

conditions for the imperialist propaganda campaigns. To some extent these factors, coupled with insufficient political-ideological vigilance and lack of effective propaganda, help to maintain the non-socialist view in public thinking, prejudices, and a moral code inherited from societies of the past, and lead to manifestations of anti-social behavior. However, it should be admitted that sometimes real mistakes and shortcomings are criticized, which are then attributed by many exclusively to the results of hostile propaganda.

Closely related to bourgeois propaganda are the intensification of nationalism, the still strong anti-Soviet sentiment, the occasional disparagement of the achievements of socialism, the entertainment of illusions about the capitalist system, the dissemination of false information and the overstatement of our internal and external problems. The hostile propaganda is especially efficient in making use of the shortcomings of our information system in relation to issues concerning the situation in each socialist country, to the position of the fraternal Parties and the way in which relations among the socialist countries and the fraternal Parties are viewed.

From time to time we play into the hands of the bourgeois propaganda campaigns by failing to recognize the imperialist endeavors in time, due to subjective and objective reasons; by wasting time on drawing the necessary conclusions or by not making use of the right conclusions in our national and international propaganda. In certain cases there are international obligations that restrict our ability to provide the necessary information.

IV.

On the basis of the resolution of the Politburo dated May 22, 1973 the fight against bourgeois propaganda has become an organic part of political and ideological work. The need for this fight has been confirmed by the 11th Party Congress and by several resolutions of the Politburo and other Party organs on information and emigration policy. As a result of the resolution of the Central Committee dated October 26, 1976 specifying the current tasks and the further development of Party propaganda, more emphasis has been given to a more effective ideological training of activists at local Party organizations, which is a prerequisite for acting against the hostile views propagated by bourgeois propaganda.

Our national and international propaganda and information policy takes up the fight against hostile propaganda and ideology by representing our general policy in a more convincing fashion, by painting a more appealing picture of existing socialism, and by unveiling the true nature of imperialist policy and the reality of capitalism. We respond to Western campaigns launched against us and the entire socialist community on specific issues in a very cool and principled manner by providing positive arguments. With certain exceptions we refrain from entering into direct disputes with outlets of bourgeois media.

In the past five years a harmonized and operative system of observing, analyzing and evaluating hostile propaganda has been established. The state organs responsible for monitoring foreign propaganda provide regular and scheduled reports. The Central Committee of KISZ [Communist Youth Organization] has recently started the regular monitoring and evaluation of bourgeois propaganda targeting the youth of our country.

The four departments of the Central Committee of HSWP involved in this work—the Departments of Propaganda, Public Administration, Foreign Affairs and Science, Culture and Public Education—and six other state bodies—the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Defense, the Institute of Cultural Relations, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Hungarian Radio, the Hungarian Press Agency—set up an evaluation team which fulfills its tasks well. The team constantly monitors hostile propaganda materials and broadcasts, and prepares a comprehensive evaluation report for every quarter.

Based on this well-established system, the Department of Propaganda of the Party conducts up-to-date monitoring and evaluation of the hostile propaganda targeting our country. The data are utilized in the following five ways: quarterly summaries are prepared on the main tendencies; thematic summaries are prepared on the bourgeois reception of our political measures and statements; weekly reports are made on the hostile evaluation of events that influence public opinion in the country; occasional information on certain specific bourgeois propaganda campaigns; the various departments of the Central Committee are continuously informed of the bourgeois commentaries that are relevant to their work. As a result, the level of providing information for the leaders has improved significantly. However, the utilization of the conclusions that can be drawn from these analyses for our domestic and foreign propaganda work is still not sufficient.

In the past few years the members of our Party have become more prepared and trained for the fight against hostile propaganda. The most important element of this increased competence is that they show ideological and political unity, they are well trained and informed about the propaganda targeting our country, and they are provided with information materials that contain some good argumentation. However, the members of the Party, especially the activists working at the local organizations, call for a more prompt response to the rumors of hostile propaganda at every level of the hierarchy of the Party, and require that they should be provided with ample information materials on a regular basis by the competent Party committees and that the necessary information should be made available verbally to all members of the Party.

The work of the radio intercept station that monitors most of the propaganda against our country does not meet the increased requirements, mainly due to technical problems, the lack of political selection, and personnel problems. The information about hostile propaganda is still not comprehensive enough, e.g. information concerning the experience that could be gained in areas like the churches, tourism and social organizations is still lacking. Furthermore, there is no evaluation or analysis that could predict the possible future tendencies of imperialist propaganda.

As a result of the work conducted in the scientific institutes of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the Institute of Foreign Affairs there has been some progress recently in the scientific analysis of the propagandistic machinations of bourgeois ideology. The institutes mentioned above have established extensive relations with similar institutes of our friendly countries. However, the coordination of their work at home is still not ensured, and there is no rational division of labor among them. Although it has prepared very valuable materials concerning certain important issues, the Institute of Foreign Affairs has not yet become a scientific center that can provide long-term analyses of hostile propaganda. Another unresolved issue is the investigation of the impact of hostile propaganda.

The system of press administration that is used to protect our country from hostile propaganda works quite efficiently. Its tasks have multiplied by now, so the staff in this area is working under a lot of pressure. The technical and personnel background supporting their versatile work in organizing and selecting information requires considerable development.

The work concerning the protection of our country from hostile radio broadcasts should be revised. As a result of the resolution of the Politburo

dated October 8, 1963 the jamming of the programs of Western radio station in the Hungarian language was terminated as of January 1, 1964. [See Documents 34 and 35] However, the resolution also stipulated that the technical system used for jamming should be maintained [so as to be] reinstalled, if necessary, within 48 hours. The transmitters, antennas and accessories that were installed 26 years ago are by now totally out-of-date, and for technical reasons some of them had to be eliminated. Under such circumstances, the system is only partly capable of fulfilling its task, if the need should arise for it. Without overall reconstruction and the replacement of missing devices, within a few years the whole system will become unable to meet any of the requirements set forth by the resolution of the Politburo. Full reconstruction and replacement would require significant financial resources.

Since 1968 our jamming stations—at Soviet request—jam Western programs broadcast in the Czech and Slovak languages. We have no information at all as to how efficient the jamming of these stations is, or whether jamming is still needed.

The exchange of views concerning hostile propaganda has become part of the ideological cooperation among the fraternal Parties of the socialist countries. The Party delegations visiting our country and the Budapest embassies of our friendly states regularly request and are provided with information about our experience gained in dealing with imperialist propaganda. We also receive such information from some of our fraternal Parties through their embassies. We have also exchanged ideas on this issue with several Western fraternal parties, such as the Italian Communist Party, the French Communist Party, the Austrian Communist Party and the German Communist Party. The relevant state bodies of socialist countries have also established a similarly comprehensive framework of cooperation. However, international experience is not utilized efficiently in our everyday work.

HUNGARIAN SOCIALIST WORKERS' PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE

Resolution

1. The Secretariat accepts the report. It establishes that, as a result of the execution of the resolution made by the Politburo at its meeting on October 8, 1963, the fight against imperialist propaganda, as an organic part of ideological and political work, has become more oriented towards its main goal and more argumentative and organized in its character.
2. The impact of propaganda targeting our country should continue to be countered—on the basis of the resolution of the Politburo—by firmly representing our policy, by presenting an authentic picture of our problems and accomplishments and by taking the initiative and the offensive in issues that demonstrate the advantages of a socialist system. The preparedness, discipline and alertness of Party members, the provision of ample information within the Party and the development of verbal propaganda are all of primary importance. To achieve this goal, regular information materials and recommendations should be worked out on the basis of the monitoring of hostile propaganda so that the activists of the Party, the state, and social organizations that are involved in propaganda work targeting the masses can argue more convincingly for our interests, position and policy and respond to hostile views more instantaneously. It is especially important to provide better training for those who are involved in giving information to foreigners who visit our country, especially tourist guides. The recommendations prepared quarterly or in relation to certain important events, which are meant to assist political work, should become an integral part of analyzing and evaluating hostile propaganda. When analyzing the attitude of the people on a regular basis the Party organizations in Budapest and the provinces should pay special attention to views that reflect the actual presence and impact of foreign propaganda. On this basis they should draw the necessary conclusions for their own propaganda work.

Deadline: continuous

In charge: Department of Propaganda of the Central Committee
Party committees of Budapest and the provinces

3. The scientific basis for the long-term analysis of hostile propaganda should be strengthened considerably. Since the strategy of hostile propaganda is unlikely to change and its tactics can be monitored by systematic methods, there is no need to set up a big new staff for the long-term analysis of this propaganda. Instead, most of the attention should be focused on better utilization of the existing bodies and institutions, and on establishing more effective cooperation between them. To this end, the Institute of Social Studies of the Central Committee should continue to investigate the trends of bourgeois ideology, while the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Central Committee and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should ensure that the Hungarian Institute of Foreign Affairs continues to analyze the strategy and tactics of imperialist propaganda as part of its research activities. Building on the work of these two basic institutions our work should be concentrated on the systematic analysis of the relations between bourgeois ideology and propaganda, making use of information and experience that we gain through our Party and state relations.

Deadline: September 30, 1979

In charge: Department of Foreign Affairs of the Central Committee
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Department of Propaganda of the Central Committee

4. The Mass Media Research Center of Hungarian Radio and Television should be provided with all the conditions that are necessary to conduct research into the effects of hostile propaganda by using tools of opinion surveys on a regular basis and with due care.

Deadline: June 30, 1979

In charge: Department of Propaganda of the Central Committee
President of the Hungarian Radio

5. There is no need to further enhance the range of bodies and institutions that are involved in the analysis of imperialist propaganda campaigns. The main task is that the bodies and institutions of the Party, the state and various social organizations involved in monitoring hostile propaganda should cooperate in their activities much more efficiently in the future. To this end the State Office for Church Affairs, the People's Patriotic Front, the National Council of Trade Unions, the Communist

Youth Organization and the bodies supervising tourism should, for every quarter, make available all the information they have to the team engaged in evaluating hostile propaganda.

In addition to periodical reports, special reports should also be prepared which investigate how a significant event related to Hungary has been received by hostile propaganda. In the future, evaluation work should also be extended to the Chinese propaganda that targets our country. It should be ensured that the information on hostile propaganda campaigns provided for the highest Party and state leadership is more relevant and coordinated. Monitoring work and evaluation should be followed by processing relevant information and experience and by drawing the necessary conclusions.

Deadline: continuous

In charge: Department of Propaganda of the Central Committee

Members of the evaluation team

6. The network of jamming and monitoring hostile radio broadcasts targeting Hungary should be brought up to a level that can meet the new requirements today. The reception center of the Hungarian Press Agency stationed outside Budapest should gradually be developed into a high-capacity radio-monitoring center by installing modern devices in accordance with our available financial resources. In this way a new service should be set up that can meet the special demands of all the state organizations involved in monitoring hostile propaganda at a high political and technological level. In addition to monitoring hostile broadcasts, this center should also be responsible for recording the broadcasts of press agencies transmitted through radio waves and, very soon, through satellites, as well as the Hungarian language programs broadcast by neighboring socialist countries. The Department of Propaganda, the Department of Public Administration and the Department of Foreign Affairs should consult with the organs concerned (National Defense Committee, Ministry of Defense, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Information Office, Hungarian Press Agency) and, based on these negotiations, a development plan which takes into consideration the realities of our economic possibilities should be made to set up a modern radio center—in several phases, if necessary—that can be used in several ways. The development plan

should be submitted to the Secretariat by the Department of Propaganda in the second half of 1979.

Deadline: for the preparation of the development plan:
June 30, 1979

In charge: leaders of the organizations concerned

7. The broadcasts of Austrian Television that can be received in a significant part of the country and those of other Western television stations received through Austria should be put on the list of programs to be monitored regularly, and the leadership should be informed of any aspects of these broadcasts that may involve Hungary. The Secretariat commissions the president of the Hungarian Television to work out the necessary system of monitoring in cooperation with the state bodies concerned. The Party committees of the districts by the Austrian border should provide regular information on how these programs affect the people in their area.

Deadline: April 30, 1979

In charge: Department of Propaganda of the Central Committee
President of the Hungarian Television

8. Investigations should be conducted to assess the possible impact of broadcasting television programs directly through satellites, and the political and technical tasks in regard to this new development should be specified without delay.

Deadline: November 30, 1979

In charge: Department of Propaganda of the Central Committee
Department of Industry, Agriculture and Transportation
of the Central Committee
President of the Hungarian Radio

9. The working conditions of the system of press administration that is involved in protecting our country from hostile propaganda should be improved considerably. A short-term and a long-term plan of measures to be taken to achieve this goal in accordance with our current financial possibilities should be submitted to the competent state bod-

ies by the president of the Information Office, after consulting with the leaders of the Hungarian Post Office.

Deadline: June 30, 1979

In charge: President of the Information Office

10. The Secretariat deems it justified that relevant sections of the resolution made by the Politburo on the protection of our country from hostile radio propaganda on October 8, 1963 be revised. To prepare for the necessary decisions, the Secretariat commissions the Department of Propaganda, the Department of Public Administration and the Department of Industry, Agriculture and Transportation of the Central Committee to make a report for the Politburo on this issue. Together with the Department of Industry, Agriculture and Transportation of the Central Committee, the Department of Foreign Affairs should discuss the efficiency of and the need for jamming Western radio programs broadcast in the Czech and Slovakian language.

Deadline: March 31, 1979

In charge: Relevant departments of the Central Committee

This resolution is received by:

- heads of departments of the Central Committee
- Minister of Foreign Affairs
- Minister of the Interior
- Minister of Defense
- President of the Information Office
- President of the Hungarian Radio
- President of the Hungarian Television
- General Manager of the Hungarian Press Agency

Source: Magyar Országos Levéltár (MOL) M-KS-288.f. 7/566.ő.e. Obtained by Csaba Békés. Translated by András Bocz.

Romania

Document No. 7: 1964. Securitate Reports on RFE's Encouragement of Romanian Independence from USSR

*Information Notes from the Foreign Information Section of the Securitate
with regard to RFE's encouragement of foreign policy autonomy, and differ-
ences of opinion on the matter within RFE.*

M.U. 0123/I
-C.22-/116

30 January 1964

NOTE

From Paris, we send you this report numbered 118/E of 27 January [1964]:

[Radio] Free Europe's central office in New York recently sent a written order to the Paris RFE bureau with regard to the future direction of their broadcasts as it concerns our country. The document suggests that future broadcasts should aim to stimulate "Romania's tendency towards independence from the USSR."

In order to accomplish the task, the Paris bureau is directed by the document to obtain data that show Romania's recent purchases of industrial equipment from the West. This data is to be used to argue that, lately, the People's Republic of Romania (PRR) is moving closer to the West, where industrial equipment is cheaper and of better quality.

From [our] sources it becomes clear that the Paris RFE bureau has very little data on this issue. Furthermore, in a separate paragraph of the document, the Central office in New York directs [the Paris RFE Office] to refer to our country as Romania rather than PRR in its future broadcasts.

ss. Major Caraman

For Conformity
Major Florian Plaiasu

Source: ACNSAS, fond SIE, file 16, 110. Published in Florian Banu and Liviu Tarau, "Aprilie 1964: Primavara de la Bucuresti: Cum s-a adoptat 'Declaratia de Independenta' a Romaniei?" (April 1964, Bucharest Spring: How did [they] adopt Romania's 'Declaration of Independence?'), (Bucharest: Enciclopedica Press, 2004), 3–4. This excerpt is translated by Mircea Munteanu.

* * *

Ministry of Internal Affairs
M.U. 0123/I

Top Secret
4 May 1964
C.22

NOTE

From Paris, we send you this report numbered 563/E of 1 May 1964:

1. The Radio Free Europe (RFE) bureau in Paris recently received a circular from the Romanian Section of the RFE in Munich which states that the current policies of the People's Republic of Romania (PRR) mark the beginning of a real course of independence from the USSR both politically and economically. [The document] mentions that the attitude of our Party and government in the Sino-Soviet conflict is an act of independence and a sincere attempt to resolve the conflict. [The document] characterizes the Romanian attitude in CMEA (Council of Mutual Economic Assistance) and purchases of industrial equipment from the West as evidence of economic independence.

2. The director of the Paris RFE bureau, former Lieutenant-Colonel Ioan Ionescu, was called by the Munich bureau and asked his opinion about the direction adopted by the current leadership of our country.

He responded that “it is an initiative of the USSR to confuse the West, and that the analysis of the Munich bureau does not correspond to the reality.”

ss. Colonel [illegible]

For Conformity
[illegible]

Source: ACNSAS, fond SIE, file 16, 111. Published in Florian Banu and Liviu Tarau, op.cit., 292–293. This excerpt is translated by Mircea Munteanu.

Poland

Document No. 8: 1966. Letter from Army Main Political Administration to Interior Minister on “Hostile” Radio Propaganda

A letter from the chief of the Polish Army Main Political Administration to the Interior Minister transmits an analysis of hostile radio propaganda prepared in the MPA for the purpose of countering “enemy propaganda” in the armed forces.

Main Political Administration of the Polish Army

Nr 0150

Warsaw, Feb. 5, 1966

Secret

Copy nr 1

Minister of Internal Affairs
Divisional General
Mieczysław Moczar

Warsaw

The enclosed document, compiled by the Main Political Administration of the PA [Polish Army], is a bi-annual analysis of hostile radio propaganda prepared at the direction of the leadership of the MND [Ministry of National Defense]. You are requested to familiarize yourself [with it]. I would also like to inform you that the enclosed analysis is based on

weekly analyses prepared by the MPA, PA [Main Political Administration of the Polish Army], whose goal is to fulfill the needs of party-political work in the army in efficiently and effectively counteracting hostile propaganda.

Enclosed 1 copy nr 66—addressee only. [Enclosure not translated]

Chief, Main Political Administration, PA
Józef Urbanowicz

Source: Institute of National Remembrance (IPN). Translated by Irena Czernichowska.

Document No. 9: 1967. Foreign Intelligence Report on RFE

This intelligence report indicates detailed knowledge of certain RFE operations, including audience research among Polish travelers in Western Europe, and news gathering by its field bureaus. It is noteworthy that the first name on the distribution list for this report was Party Chief Gomulka.

Ministry of Internal Affairs
Department One
L. dz. OCH 069/67

Warsaw
January 26, 1967
Secret

Information Report

Subject: Survey of actions of Radio Free Europe and other centers of subversion [three other topics not translated]

[...] Intelligence and ideological subversion centers and so-called Institutes for Eastern Studies utilize a wide range of survey methods, and direct and indirect forms of intelligence collection. This activity is concentrated on citizens of socialist countries, including those of the Polish People's Republic who have immigrated to the countries of Western Europe either temporarily or permanently.

One of those activities is the annual RFE survey, carried out by the RFE Audience Research Department, which creates questionnaires and instructions on how to conduct conversations and interviews. The surveys and instructions are sent to field employees in RFE offices in nine Western European cities, who hire special pollsters to contact people from Poland and interview them.

In 1966, RFE, according to our data, interviewed 1675 Polish people, recruited from different social groups. In doing so, RFE offices cooperated with a number of West European offices and public opinion institutions, on whose behalf the pollsters are currently working. Those institutions include, among others, the Vienna office of Intora—Absatz

u. Marktforschung, led by the Austrian Helmut Aigner. The RFE surveys, in addition to questions about the tasks, range, and effectiveness of the propaganda of Free Europe, included questions about the internal politics and economies of the PPR [Polish People's Republic], the extent of the "independence" of individual socialist countries, and differences within the international workers' movement.

Surveys are only one way that RFE obtains information. RFE receives materials from other sources, including US intelligence services, RFE offices in almost every capital of Western Europe, and domestic press and letters sent from Poland, which are scrupulously analyzed.

Last year RFE obtained some two thousand written pieces of information from various sources concerning Polish affairs.

Once the materials have been received, they are microfilmed, registered, filed, and given a control mark indicating the level of secrecy. RFE employees utilize highly developed workshops, such as a library containing seven million documents relating to socialist countries, indexes, and a press materials classifying system. Using the entire complicated system of information gathering and analysis, RFE offices are able to prepare comprehensive reports for the centers of subversion and espionage.

It is testimony to the wide use of surveys that several staff members at the Paris *Kultura* also prepared a questionnaire that is being used to conduct conversations and surveys. (see attachment no 2 [not translated]).

* * *

No similar research is carried out in Poland. Led by our organization, sporadic conversations with citizens of the capitalist countries who register here are in general met with sharp interventions and protests from the foreign diplomatic posts.

Source: Institute of National Remembrance (IPN). Translated by Irena Czernichowska.

Document No. 10: 1976. Analysis of Western Radio “Propaganda” Directed at Poland

This document is an example of the monthly analyses of Western broadcasting to Poland prepared by the Interior Ministry-affiliated Institute for the Study of Contemporary Problems of Capitalism. It is representative of the extensive cottage industry devoted to such analyses that developed in Poland in the 1970s.

[Excerpt]

Confidential

TRENDS OF WESTERN RADIO PROPAGANDA BROADCAST IN POLISH

Monthly Analysis

Institute for the Contemporary Study of Capitalism

January 1976

CONTENTS

1. General evaluation	I
2. Radio Free Europe	1
3. BBC	13
4. Deutsche Welle and Deutschlandfunk	17
5. Voice of America	23
6. Radio Vatican	27
7. Radio Tirana	30
8. Radio Liberty	32

General Evaluation

In January this year, in the broadcasts of Radio Free Europe, the BBC, Deutsche Wells, and Deutschlandfunk, as well as Radio Vatican, there has been a noticeable intensification, beginning in the second half of December last year, of propaganda questioning the existence of basic citizens' rights in Poland. Only the Voice of America, which concentrated on problems related to the Soviet Union and international affairs, did not join this propaganda stream.

Issues of citizens' freedoms also dominated broadcasts about the internal affairs of the socialist countries, especially the Soviet Union. That propaganda was complemented by commentaries about a wide range of social-economic issues in Poland and the Soviet Union, as well as in other socialist countries.

The propaganda of Radio Tirana contained predominantly social-economic topics, with a slightly decreased number of programs dealing with Poland and an increase in the attacks on the Soviet Union.

In general, analysis of the propaganda of all the broadcasting stations indicates the following:

- a. A clear increase in propaganda aimed at casting doubt on the existence of basic citizens' rights, and the functioning of democratic mechanisms in Poland and the Soviet Union, which also referred to mandatory international norms [applicable to] internal laws: RFE, BBC, DW and DF, Voice of America, and Radio Vatican.
- b. An increase in the tendency to exploit alleged discontent with the policies of the authorities regarding the freedom of citizens in Poland and the Soviet Union and attempts to grant them the rank of a political opposition: RFE, BBC, DW, Voice of America, and Radio Vatican.
- c. Exaggerating the temporary economic difficulties in Poland and the Soviet Union and using them to criticize the socialist system and the socio-economic policies of the Party and government in those countries: RFE, BBC, DW and DF, and Voice of America.
- d. Criticizing Soviet policies in relation to other socialist countries, West European Communist and workers' parties, and capitalist countries: RFE, BBC, DW and DF, and Voice of America.

INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF POLISH PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC IN BROADCASTING STATION PROPAGANDA

The stations giving the most attention to Polish internal affairs were RFE, followed by BBC, DW, Radio Vatican, and Radio Tirana. All those broadcasting stations, except Radio Tirana, exploited the case of the so-called testament of fifty-nine intellectuals, and the position of the church hierarchy on the question of the projected changes in the constitution of the Polish People's Republic. The propaganda has focused on the freedom of the citizens, as affected by the projected constitutional changes and the Final Resolutions of the CSCE [Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe].

No significant changes have been observed in the propaganda of the Voice of America or Radio Tirana. Voice of America abstains from direct propaganda interference in Polish internal affairs. By criticizing Soviet politics, however, it indirectly influences Polish listeners, suggesting references and comparisons to them.

Filled with demagogic elements, Radio Tirana propaganda concentrates on trying to get workers and Polish youth to join the illegal CPP [Communist Party of Poland] and criticizing Poland's economic contacts with the Soviet Union and with the developed capitalist countries as a "direct threat to the interests of the Polish nation."

Among the more significant themes regarding Polish internal affairs in the propaganda of the broadcasting stations, the following are worth mentioning:

- a. Use of "testament 59" and the church position in the projected changes in the PPR Constitution to criticize party and government policies regarding respect for the constitutional liberty of the citizens: RFE, BBC, DW, and Radio Vatican;
- b. Attempting to link the "testament 59" position of its signatories to the position taken by the Episcopate to suggest the existence in Poland of a political opposition: RFE, BBC, DW and Radio Vatican;
- c. Spreading critical evaluations and prognoses of the economic situation in Poland: RFE, BBC, and DW.

POLISH FOREIGN POLICY

Some commentaries about Polish foreign policy concerned progress in normalization of relations between Poland and West Germany. The majority of the commentaries concentrated on the differences among West German political parties regarding the ratification of the Helsinki agreement with Poland. The interest of the governing coalition in further normalizing relations with Poland was also mentioned. Only Radio Tirana criticized the PPR agreement that allowed Polish citizens of German descent to emigrate to the FRG, stating that it was a concession to the “Bonn revanchists.”

For purposes of comparison, the analysis also contains an evaluation of the main commentaries by Radio Liberty broadcast in Russian. In the afore-mentioned period, this station’s propaganda concentrated on the economic problems of socialist countries and criticized the economic situation in Soviet Union and the economic policy of the CPSU. Attempts were also made to impugn CPSU politics toward other Communist and workers’ parties in Western Europe, and to question the Soviet Union’s peaceful policies in that arena.

Source: Institute of National Remembrance (IPN). Translated by Irena Czernichowska.

Document No. 11: 1976. Analysis of Western Radio Coverage of KOR

(Committee for the Defense of the Workers)

This analysis by the Institute for the Study of Contemporary Problems of Capitalism indicates regime concern over RFE's coverage of the first organized dissident movements in Poland.

Institute for the Study of Contemporary Problems of Capitalism
October 1976

PROPAGANDA OF WESTERN BROADCASTING STATIONS ABOUT THE SO-CALLED WORKERS' DEFENSE COMMITTEE AND THE SUPREME COURT SENTENCE ON THE SEVEN PARTICIPANTS IN THE URSUS EVENTS

Analysis of broadcasts from Oct. 1–4, 1976

The so-called Workers' Defense Committee and the verdict by the Supreme Court on the seven participants in the events in Ursus are still the most prominent propaganda themes on Western broadcasting stations. These issues were referred to in all Western broadcasts discussing the country's internal politics. Most attention to the subject was paid by RFE and DW, which, besides their own information and commentaries, broadcast the full text of a so-called appeal and introductory letter of the Committee.

The main themes of the Western broadcasting stations were focused on:

Efforts to create a so-called Workers' Defense Committee to defend workers' rights and civil liberty;

Discrediting the trade unions' [role] in representing working-class interests;

Spreading the argument that the Supreme Court verdict was dictated, not by the need to impose the rules of socialist legality in Poland, but by the Party's alleged fears of opposition activities intensifying in Polish society.

According to Western radio commentators, the establishment of the Committee was a spontaneous expression of the "connection of the intellectual environment with the workers' world." BBC stressed that the establishment of the Committee would mean the end of the "isolation of Polish intellectuals from other classes of society." The Committee was established, in their opinion, because the trade unions were slow to defend the interests of the working class. "Thus," they said, "the Polish episcopate and intellectuals had to defend the interests of the working world, although the formal defender of the workers should have been the trade union." Similar propaganda themes appeared in broadcasts discussing the verdict of the Supreme Court on the seven participants in the events in Ursus, which was interpreted as stemming from pressures by "opposition intellectuals" and the church. "Those who have the responsibility of defending collective and individual worker's interests," it was said, "did not meet their obligations in this case."

The main argument for attacking the trade unions was that they "didn't defend the workers who were arrested in Ursus and Radom," nor did the trade union press, nor the factory organizations. Such arguments also dominated the propaganda of the Western stations regarding the preparations for the Trade Unions Congress in Poland.

The aim was to confer on the so-called Workers' Defense Committee the status of the main defender, alongside the Polish episcopate, of the interests of the working class. At the same time attempts were made to underpin the authority of the Committee organizers. For example, it was stressed that J. Andrzejewski is "being considered by the Western literary critics as a Nobel Literature Prize candidate," and that E. Lipiński is "viewed as a great authority among economists."

According to RFE, the main motive for the [founding of the] Committee was to "sensitize Polish society to its predicament." The Committee's aims were compared with the activities of "inter-war social organizations protecting political prisoners" in Poland, such as the League for Defense of Human Rights and Citizens. According to the broadcast, the founders of the Committee will play roles similar to those of Stefania

Stempołowska, Andrzej Strug, Halina Krachelska, Teodor Duracz, and Wanda Wasilewska during the period between the wars.

Much attention was devoted to discrediting socialist legality and justice. Regarding the Supreme Court sentence on the seven participants in the Ursus incident, [Western] propaganda claimed that the “fate of a political prisoner in Poland was without doubt harder than the fate of a convicted criminal.” Analogies were also made with the legality of the Third Reich. In several broadcasts references were made to the E. Morgiewicz case and attempts to create in Poland a division of Amnesty International.

All commentaries stated that the establishment of the so-called Workers’ Defense Committee “was already bearing fruit, as seen in the shorter sentence given to the seven workers in Ursus.” It was also suggested that the Supreme Court decision indicated an “understanding by the judges of the workers’ right to protest.” According to RFE this is how the decision of the Supreme Court should be understood, “regardless of the fact that, in the view of obvious economic difficulties and the tense situation in work places, canceling the July sentences against the workers is, in a sense, beneficial to the authorities.”

The broadcasts saw the Supreme Court sentence as confirming the PPR authorities’ decision that, “in the case of participation in strikes or demonstrations which take place as a consequence of inappropriate decisions by the government, workers should not be punished.” In the RFE interpretation, the Supreme Court sentence confirmed that “workers from Ursus and other places, on June 25 of the current year, had serious reasons to spontaneously express discontent on a large scale.”

Thus the opinion that the aim of the “spontaneous” creation of the Workers’ Defense Committee was “to fight for the basic rights and interests of the workers, which in light of the Fourth Plenum of the CC PUWP and the recent Sejm session, authorities do not intend to question.” This role—in the opinion of RFE and DW—is one that the trade unions and other social organizations of the PPR are unable to fulfill. The main purpose of this propaganda is to assert that the activities of the so-called Workers’ Defense Committee are in accordance with socialist legality and the social-political program of the PUWP.

Source: Polish State Archives (AAN). Translated by Irena Czernichowska.

Document No. 12: 1983. Polish Intelligence Alleges RFE Links to CIA

This May 1983 document draws on Polish intelligence service reporting to detect a hidden CIA hand behind RFE broadcasts (although the CIA connection had been severed twelve years earlier). It is representative of Polish intelligence reports on RFE in those years, which were usually far less accurate than Soviet and other East European intelligence reports.

Warsaw, 23 May 1983

Secret

Copy Nr 1

OFFICIAL NOTE

In carrying out my duties, I have in recent days received from an intelligence source information [report] pertaining to Zdzisław Najder, according to which, as director of the so-called Polish Section of Radio Free Europe, he spent November 29–December 12, 1982 in the USA at the direction of the CIA. While there, he participated in a meeting organized by the Board for International Broadcasting (BIB) headed by Glenn Ferguson, a career agent of the CIA. During this meeting Zdzisław Najder received new instructions from the CIA, mainly concerning the political work of the Polish Section of RFE, as follows:

- Attempt to intensify RFE initiatives aimed at increasing socio-political tensions in Poland during martial law;
- In view of the “weakening of Solidarity” (as it was called in the meeting), [he should] create within the shortest possible time, through contacts between RFE and the underground structures of the former Solidarity in Poland, a central base abroad, which would coordinate the activity of the “underground movement” in Poland;
- Assist with the creation of a financial base abroad for the building of an “underground state” in Poland;
- Urgently expand the network of RFE collaborators inside Poland as a covert group which, under the guise of information-gathering for propaganda purposes, would in fact carry out espionage for the CIA, taking advantage of current social radicalization in Poland.

These instructions would put into practice the directive of the State Department about sharpening RFE's approach to the socialist countries, specifically Poland and the USSR.

Reacting to G. Ferguson's appraisal of the present situation in Poland, and the method of carrying out his instructions, Z. Najder stated that:

- RFE must increase its activity in order to hasten the inevitable (in his opinion) breakdown of Poland in all practical realms, which must result in “revolt;”
- All possible mechanisms of pressure should be brought to bear on that part of the Polish Episcopate around Cardinal Glemp, in order to halt its dangerous [accommodationist] policy toward the Polish authorities;
- [RFE] should work to counter the argument of “various circles and milieux” that it is linked to the CIA; the principle should be accepted that any worker in the Polish Section whose ties with the CIA are uncovered would immediately lose his employment at RFE. This would create an added element of discipline for people employed at RFE, while requiring any RFE employees cooperating with the CIA or staff agents of that agency, to take pains to conceal their contacts.

During his trip to the USA, Z. Najder also received special intelligence training pertaining to his new tasks for the CIA as director of the Polish Section of Radio Free Europe. He also met with G. Ferguson directly many times.

Inspector of the Interior Ministry
Signatory
Colonel Sylwester FLAKO

Stamp of the Office of the Minister, Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Source: Urząd ochrony państwa collection, Hoover Archives. Located and translated by A. Ross Johnson.

Document No. 13: 1988. Information Bulletin for Party Leadership on Western Views of Poland

This document is an example of analyses prepared for the top Party leadership on the content of Western broadcasts to Poland. It provides, without editorializing or pejorative clauses, an interpretation of the Western broadcasts.

[Excerpt]

Supplement to Daily Information Bulletin, May 4, 1988.

Secret

Western analyses of the current social-political situation in Poland

The rash of strikes in some parts of the country continues to attract a lot of attention from Western governments and opinion-makers. We present below some of the reactions of those circles to the situation in Poland.
[...]

3. Commentaries of Polish-language Western broadcasting stations

Reports on the continuing strikes in Poland remain a main theme for Polish-language Western broadcasters. The Polish Section of RFE has the lead in this regard, devoting some 90% of its broadcasts to the subject. Just as in 1980–1981, the broadcasts aim to encourage and shape ongoing events, in some cases by putting on the air Polish opposition activists to mobilize the broad mass of Polish society to radicalize pay demands and spread the strikes.

In commentaries on the subject, the strikes are presented as a success for the opposition, which for years has aimed at changing the social-political system in Poland.

Distribution:

Comrade Wojciech Jaruzelski
[and 38 other named recipients]

Source: Institute for National Remembrance (IPN). Obtained by Lechosław Gawlikowski. Translated by A. Ross Johnson.

USSR

Document No. 14: 1953. TASS to CPSU on “anti-Soviet Propaganda” of VOA on Death of Lev Mekhlis

This TASS information bulletin was sent to the Central Committee and the USSR Council of Ministers. Note the distribution to Stalin and Malenkov only.

Outgoing N° 283 ss
18 February 1953

Top Secret
Copy N° 4

Anti-Soviet propaganda of the Voice of America

New York (Voice of America in Russian, 17:45, 17 February, official transcript)

Regarding the death of the Soviet dignitary, Lev Mekhlis.

Moscow Radio has reported the death and ceremonial burial of a prominent Soviet dignitary who was once close to Stalin, Lev Mekhlis.

When a report of the death of any eminent person appears in any free country no one is in any doubt that he actually died from the cause given.

This cannot be said of the death of Soviet dignitaries. Possibly Mekhlis died from a heart rupture or from some other cause. It is possible that the medical report on the pages of Moscow newspapers signed by some important Soviet doctors is true. And possibly it isn't.

People ask themselves different questions. Did they kill Mekhlis in Moscow? Was he poisoned so that the doctors who signed the medical report of his death could then be accused of murder?

The Kremlin rulers have accustomed the entire world to such questions. No one ever knows what a particular Soviet dignitary dies of. Not one Soviet dignitary knows whether the medical report of his death will be true, for the Soviet government has already given notice of the falsity of several medical reports, sometimes many years later.

It is also possible that an elaborate funeral for Mekhlis was set up as a smokescreen in order to somewhat conceal the already obvious anti-Semitism of the Soviet regime from everyone.

In a country under Communist domination everything is possible.

Four copies were printed.

1-2 – to Comrade Stalin

3 – to Comrade Malenkov

4 – to the 4th Department's files

Source: State Archives of the Russian Federation, GARF. F. R-4459. Op. 38. D. 477, 7–8. Obtained by Vladimir Tolz. Translated by Gary Goldberg.

Document No. 15: 1953. TASS on Radio Liberation
Broadcast to USSR Military in Germany during June 1953
East German Revolt

This TASS bulletin containing the transcript of a Radio Liberation broadcast urging Soviet forces stationed in East Germany to "return to the barracks" was sent to top Soviet officials. Radio Liberation, later to be renamed Radio Liberty, went on the air in March 1953.

N° 862. 25 June 1953

Top Secret

Vile American Radio Propaganda

(Radio station Liberation in Russian, 00:15, 24 June, official transcript)

(The beginning of the broadcast was not received for technical reasons.)

Officers and men of the Group of Occupation Forces! You have been sent to suppress German workers who have rebelled. Return to the barracks and tell your comrades how the workers are fighting for their rights. The revolt of the Berlin workers and their courage should serve as an example for the Soviet Army. [...]

Wives of Soviet officers and soldiers, tell your husbands, Soviet officers, and men what you are learning from German friends, neighbors, cleaning women, drivers, and apartment owners. Show local residents that your sympathies are on the side of the workers who have rebelled and are striking. Tell them that our people deeply sympathize with their brave struggle.

A new radio station is on the air, the radio station of the coordinating center of the anti-Bolshevik struggle is on the air. Listen to Liberation Radio.

Thirty-three copies were printed. Distribution was made to:

- 1-2 to Comrade Malenkov
- 3-4 to Comrade L.P. Beria
- 5-6 to Comrade V.M. Molotov
- 7 to Comrade K.Ye. Voroshilov

8 to Comrade N.S. Khrushchev
9 to Comrade N.A. Bulganin
10 to Comrade L.M. Kaganovich
11 to Comrade A.I. Mikoyan
12 to Comrade M.Z. Saburov
13 to Comrade M.G. Pervukhin
14 to Comrade M.A. Suslov
15 to Comrade P.K. Ponomarenko
16 to Comrade P.N. Pospelov
17 to Comrade N.N. Shatalin
18 to Comrade S.N. Kruglov
19 to Comrade A.Ya. Vyshinsky
20–21 to Comrade A.A. Gromyko
22 to Comrade B.Z. Kobulov
23 to Comrade I.A. Serov
24 to Comrade V.G. Grigoryan
25 to Comrade V.S. Ryasnyy
26 to Comrade S.A. Goglidze
27 to Comrade V.A. Zorin
28 to Comrade P.V. Fedotov
29–30 to the TASS 4th Department file
31–33 to the archives

Source: State Archives of the Russian Federation, GARF. F. R-4459. Op. 38. D. 495. 404–5, 410. Obtained by Vladimir Tolz. Translation by Gary Goldberg.

Document No. 16: 1953. Transcript of VOA Broadcast Citing Radio Liberation Appeal to Soviet Military in Germany

This document is the transcript of a VOA broadcast citing part of the Radio Liberation program mentioned above.

26 June 1953

Top Secret

New York (Voice of America in Russian, 17:15, 25 June, official transcript)

New York. The radio station Liberation, which is under the control of the coordinating center of Russian anti-Communist organizations to fight Bolshevism, turned to Soviet occupation troops in East Germany in connection with the worker unrest in the Soviet zone of Germany.

Under the general heading of "What is to be done?," the radio station Liberation turned to Soviet occupation troops with the following appeals:

"Officers and men of the Group of Forces! The demands of the Berlin workers are also the demands of our workers. Their struggle is our struggle. The Berlin workers have acted against a dictatorship in the name of all enslaved peoples, including our people. Don't shoot at the workers! Show Berliners that we are on their side, that you are not gendarmes but brothers in a common struggle for workers' rights.

Soviet patrols in Berlin! Show that you are on the side of the workers when patrolling the streets of Berlin. Fraternization with the workers of Berlin will convince the whole world that the Soviet Army and our people are against the Communist dictatorship. In case of danger, go to the Western sectors. Crossing over to the West, a refusal to act against workers will show the whole world on whose side the Soviet Army and our people are. Together with the workers of Berlin you will become an example for Soviet troops and for our people among us in the Motherland."

Thirty-four copies were printed. Distribution was made to:

- 1-2 to Comrade Malenkov
- 3-4 to Comrade L.P. Beria
- 5-6 to Comrade V.M. Molotov
- 7 to Comrade K.Ye. Voroshilov
- 8 to Comrade N.S. Khrushchev

9 to Comrade N.A. Bulganin
10 to Comrade L.M. Kaganovich
11 to Comrade A.I. Mikoyan
12 to Comrade M.Z. Saburov
13 to Comrade M.G. Pervukhin
14 to Comrade M.A. Suslov
15 to Comrade P.K. Ponomarenko
16 to Comrade P.N. Pospelov
17 to Comrade N.N. Shatalin
18 to Comrade S.N. Kruglov
19 to Comrade A.Ya. Vyshinsky
20–21 to Comrade A.A. Gromyko
22 to Comrade B.Z. Kobulov
23 to Comrade I.A. Serov
24 to Comrade V.G. Grigoryan
25 to Comrade V.S. Ryasny
26 to Comrade S.A. Goglidze
27 to Comrade V.A. Zorin
28 to Comrade P.V. Fedotov
29 to Comrade G.M. Pushkin
30–31 to the TASS 4th Department file
32–34 to the archives

Source: State Archives of the Russian Federation, GARF. F. R-4459. Op. 38. D. 495. 425–6, 430. Obtained by Vladimir Tolz. Translation by Gary Goldberg.

Document No. 17: 1966. Gosteleradio Review of Tactics of Foreign Radio Propaganda

This lengthy review of foreign radio propaganda by Y. Novikov, an official of the USSR Gosteleradio [State Television and Radio] Guidance Department, pays particular attention to what it sees as Western broadcasters' attempts to discredit Marxism-Leninism and Communist economics, as well as the notion of convergence between capitalism and Communism.

[Excerpt]

26 November 1966

Anti-Communism is the main weapon of imperialist radio propaganda in the Russian language

Western radio propaganda in the Russian language is part of a premeditated imperialist bourgeois global psychological war against the USSR and socialist countries. The main ideological weapon of imperialism in such a war has been and remains anti-Communism, which in recent years has ever more clearly taken on an overtone of anti-Sovietism.

In broad terms anti-Soviet radio propaganda is waged in three main directions: first, public opinion inside the capitalist countries themselves is conditioned; second, in recent years, a persistent and ever-widening expansion of anti-Soviet propaganda to the young nations of Asia, Africa, and Latin America who are travelling the path of non-capitalist development has been noted; third, the ideological offensive against socialist countries is intensifying in the hope of sowing enmity and hatred among them, causing doubt that the tasks which the fraternal peoples have set themselves can be attained, and causing a split in the international Communist movement.

These three directions have much in common, but they have their own features. The general trend is slander of the USSR, its economic system, political system, and culture. The principles of Soviet domestic and foreign policy are distorted, and the status of classes and ethnic groups and the conditions of family and personality development in the USSR are depicted in a false light. Moreover, not only the methods but, to a degree, the contents of the propaganda are modified, depending on to whom it is addressed.

Thus, the falsification of the ideas of Communism, the policy of splitting the world Communist movement, these are the main directions

of the struggle of the ideologists of capitalism in the psychological war against the USSR.

In analyzing the content of the Russian-language material broadcast by Western radio stations one cannot fail to notice that the efforts of imperialist propaganda have been stepped up recently in the direction of fighting Communism in the realm of ideology.

Such materials can be divided into two categories depending on to whom they are addressed. The first category includes opuses in the spirit of the usual standards of anti-Communism and anti-Sovietism. They contain all sorts of inventions about the life of the Soviet people and crude slander of the social and governmental systems of the USSR and are aimed at the poorly-informed listener. The second category includes material the authors of which aspire to the role of "scientific" debunkers of Communism. It is aimed at the Soviet intelligentsia, specialists in various areas of the economy, and young students.

1. It ought to be noted that the most unbridled and crudest anti-Communist propaganda is conducted by the West German radio Deutsche Welle which, in a program of 6 November of this year, hypocritically stated: "We do not plan to impose our social system and our political ideas. You won't help the cause with bad language and polemics." Deutsche Welle attacked Soviet domestic and foreign policy especially maliciously. In materials describing the domestic political situation of the USSR, the radio reiterated "the profound weakness of Soviet domestic policy," tying, in particular, this thesis of theirs to the adoption of recent laws on measures to strengthen the protection of public order (Deutsche Welle, 16 October 1966). In addition, this thesis was fortified by inventions about the "growing dissatisfaction" of the Soviet people in general, and of the intelligentsia especially, with the policy of the Party and government. Voice of America joined in with similar statements. For example, on 30 September 1966, Washington Radio expounded on some "conflict" in Soviet society between "new forces and the faceless, but ever more powerful, bureaucracy which has entrenched itself in the CPSU administration and leadership." West German propagandists describe Soviet foreign policy as expansionist, even thinking up a special term for this: "Soviet imperialism." Typical in this regard is the broadcast of Deutsche Welle of 18 September 1966 which wrongly interpreted the meaning of Soviet press statements that nuclear war, if it is unleashed by imperialism, will hasten the process of enlightenment of the popular masses of the capi-

talist countries. The conclusion was drawn that the Soviet leadership “is playing with the idea of nuclear war and the advantages which it gives them,” and also “is preparing the Soviet people for an armed conflict with the West.” Finally, Deutsche Welle does not stop at an outright perversion of historical facts concerning the making of the Great October Socialist Revolution and the course and outcome of the Great Patriotic War.

In a number of cases, such radio stations as BBC, the Voice of America, and Radio Italia do not lag behind Deutsche Welle in crude anti-Soviet and anti-Communist propaganda. Most often they subject the Soviet system to open attack and distort the teachings of Marxism-Leninism about a socialist state and the equality of nations, accusing Communists of an “organic” inability to correctly and democratically use power for the good of the people. For example, on 21 September 1966, BBC declared, “The teachings of Marxism-Leninism have proved that it is a successful means of seizing and holding power. However it also affirms its ability to use scientific laws in practice, like how power ought to be used for the good of mankind. Is this affirmation correct?” And BBC further presented a deliberate lie aimed at listeners inexperienced in political questions: “In fact, when Lenin seized power he had only the most general ideas about how to use it.” BBC commentator de Mauny, in a broadcast of 15 October 1966, openly slandered Soviet society and Soviet Man. In his opinion, “a distinctive feature of Soviet society is the unique psychology of the besieged which is inculcated with the aid of terror,” and [he] also [claims] that for almost 30 years the Soviet people “have been led from a position of falsehood.” Another example can be cited. Western radio propaganda is continuing a campaign whose goal is the discrediting of the ethnic policy of the Soviet government, to prove that inequality of nations is possible in a socialist state. This is constantly repeated in broadcasts by radio stations (in particular, the Voice of America of 16 September, Radio Italia of 20 September, Deutsche Welle of 27 September, etc.) in which it is stated that anti-Semitism is supposedly flourishing in the USSR and that “practical steps have been taken to destroy Jewish culture and restrict the Jewish intelligentsia.”

2. It is instructive that in recent years the methods and forms of anti-Communist propaganda have substantially changed, and its overall ideological and theoretical level has increased. This conclusion is confirmed by the Western press itself. For example, an article “Speaking with Russians in a New Language,” published in the American magazine *New Republic* [November 6, 1965—note in original document], said in par-

ticular, “Considering the gradually developing opportunity to exert influence on Soviet society from outside, the only means of long-term communications with the Russian people by our government—the Voice of America radio and the illustrated magazine *Amerika*—are undergoing a secret revolution.” The expression “slowly but steadily” has become the slogan of Voice of America broadcasts, in the words of the article’s author. Director-General of the BBC, Hugh Carleton Greene, in an article [in the West German magazine *Fernsehen*, N° 3, 1964—*note in original document*] confirms this idea: “No matter what ideas play a role here, however, the cessation of jamming presents us with great and new opportunities to communicate with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. This fact ought to find reflection in the form and style of our programs, but, of course, not in their essential content.”

Actually, criticism of Communist ideas (done, of course, with unrestrained apologetics for the ideological and political principles of capitalism) is now most often clothed in the pseudo-scientific form of assorted theoretical and ideological research, trying to “debunk” Marxism-Leninism. These changes, whatever bourgeois propaganda says, were primarily brought about by the successes of the world socialist system and also by the general disintegration of capitalism, and which they are already in no position to deny and denigrate without substantiation.

The pseudo-scientific theories which the “debunkers” of Marxism-Leninism have adopted are not combined into any orderly and unified ideological system. They are a conglomerate of more or less distinct concepts, and the differences are not of a fundamental nature. In the final account, all of them express the secret desire of the ideologists of capitalism to find an opening to the hearts and minds of the Soviet people and to make “the peaceful coexistence of ideologies” an accomplished fact.

The essence of these anti-scientific concepts boils down to the following assertions:

a) Many tenets of Marxism-Leninism “have become obsolete and have been turned into dogma.” As a consequence they are generally “useless” in describing modern societies. For example, Voice of America commentator (Demeter), expounding in a 26 September 1966 program about the “weakening of dogmatic Marxism” in the countries of Eastern Europe, stated that this is explained by “a common recognition that the forms envisioned by Lenin have become an anachronism in our time.” And Schirk, an official of Deutsche Welle, seconds this: “The picture

which Marxism-Leninism draws in describing the structure of society is obviously borrowed from geology. It is reminiscent of the stratification of sedimentary rock around the Earth's core with a strict delineation of individual strata and layers; according to Marxist ideology, the upper layers press heavily on the lower ones. Such a picture of the capitalist social structure is completely obsolete. It is possible that it corresponded to reality in the middle of the last century when the rapid growth of industrialization disrupted the social system that had existed up to that time." On 30 October 1966, D. Dewendem, another commentator for the same radio, analyzed a book by the bourgeois sociologist E. Richter, *Novoye obshchestvo na Vostoke i Zapade* [*A New Society in the East and the West*]. Using the tenets of this book, he tried to instill in listeners the thought that supposedly all ideologists, classes, and their corresponding institutions have already been eliminated and were suitable only for the initial phase of development of both bourgeois and socialist society. Archbishop Ioann of San Francisco, a permanent correspondent of the Voice of America, has repeated in many conversations that "so-called scientific materialism is a world view that became ossified in the perspectives of some German naturalists of the 1860s."

At the same time, Western radio propagandists raise the issue of a re-examination and reevaluation of Marxist teachings which are "incorrectly interpreted" in socialist countries.

b) Contemporary socialist society and the capitalist system are undergoing a process of gradual transformation in their domestic socio-political and economic structure, which has been a consequence of "natural forces of development." Thus, in confirmation of the above thesis, the ideologists of capitalism tirelessly talk of the appearance in capitalist and socialist societies of a "new class," a so-called elite of scientists and specialists, to whom power would gradually be transferred. In the USSR and socialist countries, this elite "will cast Marxist ideology in doubt or completely reject it" (Voice of America commentator N. Lyaskovsky, 16 May 1966).

The theory about a so-called society of abundance or a state of general prosperity on the capitalist model is being propagandized ever more actively by Western radio stations. For example, the Voice of America stated [on 27 October 1966, report of Columbia University Prof. K.A. Berry on the topic of "The American Economy Today" on the regular program "Forum"—*note in original document*] that the development of

corporations in the US “splintered the old capitalist structure in half. No more can a rich man, directly using his money in the form of capital, build a mill, workshop, chemical, or automobile plant.” In the opinion of the radio station, ownership of American industry in the form of stock “is to a growing degree moving into the hands of the people.” Thus, the author of the report summarizes, “the Marxist capitalist is very quietly disappearing.” For its part, on 5 September 1966, Radio Canada pointed out that Marx supposedly erred in predicting the impoverishment of workers under capitalism and the unavoidable collapse of the system of private enterprise. In the words of the Canadian commentator, “the forces of capitalism, having collided with the forces of the parliamentary system, ended up being threatened with destruction and began to display a feeling of responsibility for the fate of the people.” Deutsche Welle has repeatedly described worker participation in the management of enterprises in the FRG, which “facilitates the elimination of a sharp front line between labor and capital.” West German theorists ceaselessly clog the airwaves with their conclusions about the building of a classless society in the FRG within the framework of a “free Western democracy” where all the people have “equal rights and a chance at success, [and] not just on paper.” According to their estimates, statistical data testify to the appearance in West German society of a middle stratum instead of “Marxist” classes: in 1965, 8% of all families had a monthly income of more than 1500 marks after taxes; 21% of families had from 1000 to 1500 to 1500 [sic] marks; 25% from 750 to 900 marks (Deutsche Welle, 28 September 1966). Thus, class affiliation no longer determines a person’s status in bourgeois society: “neither profession nor origin, but income.” However, it is unclear where the theoreticians from Deutsche Welle put the remaining 46% of West German families.

On the basis of a concept about the transformation of capitalist society into a so-called classless society, bourgeois ideologists are endeavoring to prove that the class struggle and class antagonism are losing ground in the main capitalist countries. For example, the Voice of America, advertising the efforts of the Johnson Administration to create a notorious “Great Society” in the US, persuaded listeners that the process has created the challenge of “increasing the well-being chiefly of those who are in greatest need, but not by class struggle, and not simply by redistributing material goods, but by an accumulation of these goods by all social groups in the process of their cooperation on the basis of mutual understanding and mutual respect of their interests.” On 31 August

1966 clerical broadcasters from Radio Vatican, while acknowledging the existence of class divisions in capitalist society which “should be obvious and inevitable,” at the same time stood up for “deproletarianization of the proletariat” not by “irresponsible class struggle” but “through the amicable combined work of different strata of society bearing a common responsibility in accordance with their professional status and [their] actions to tend to common business.”

The efforts of Western radio propaganda have recently been directed at pushing on Soviet listeners the theory of a so-called “natural erosion of Communism,” which is supposedly occurring in the USSR and socialist countries as a consequence of economic reforms. For example, in his lecture broadcast by the BBC on 3 October 1966, A. Zauberman, a lecturer from the London Institute of Economic and Social Sciences, stated that putting these reforms into practice “would be tied to radical changes in the structure of the Soviet economy and deep social changes.” On 8 October, in speaking about the economy of Yugoslavia, the same radio stated much more clearly, “These changes have become necessary because it is impossible to move further without decentralizing and liberalizing the economy to a level close to a restoration of capitalism.”

Thus, Soviet radio listeners are prompted to the following conclusion: first, capitalism as such never existed, and it is changing into a “society of abundance,” without a clearly expressed class structure, with a so-called “mixed” economy; second, Soviet society and its economy in turn, and also the society and economy of the socialist countries, are undergoing a process of “peaceful transformation” in the direction of capitalism.

c) The thesis of a convergence of capitalism and socialism and a “fusion” of these systems ultimately into a “single industrial super-society” has become all the more popular in the musings of Western radio propaganda on the direction of the progress of mankind.

This thesis is buttressed by the anti-scientific theory of the development of mankind in stages, which is set against the Marxist-Leninist world view. According to its postulates, all modern societies are variations of one and the same industrial society. The point is just what level of development of technology, the degree of use of scientific and technical progress in production, and finally, the level of consumption a given society has achieved. This theory, by the way, is based on the assertions of bourgeois radio propaganda that the US, Britain, the FRG, France, and

other capitalist countries have achieved a higher level of development than the Soviet Union, that is, “the stage of mass consumption.”

The above thesis was propagandized most clearly and vividly in one Voice of American program [15 September 1966, the Forum program. A report by American economist Yu. Stern, “The Problems of Modernization”—*note in original document*]. On the one hand, in the words of the radio station, a movement of the capitalist system in the direction of socialism is being observed (“free training for everyone supported by the government, progressive income taxes, social insurance for such needs as health, and finally purposefulness in the matter of the growth of the national economy”). On the other hand, socialist society “is beginning to recognize a number of achievements of the capitalist economy: decentralization, the existence of collective and private property, and earning profits.”

It ought to be said, in addition, that, in the defense of doomed imperialism, the ideologists of the West place special reliance on interpreting the state monopoly system of the economy, established in the largest capitalist countries as a mixed economy which is based on the principles of the “free market” and is complemented by government regulation and “public” property (for example, the supply of natural gas and electricity, the sewer system, etc.). In the process the concept of public property is deliberately identified with government property, which under the conditions of a capitalist dictatorship are not one and the same (Deutsche Welle, 28 September).

How is this convergence of the capitalist and socialist systems to be accomplished in practice? Western radio propagandists reply that it is necessary for both sides to follow some “moral code of constructive coexistence.” But how do these gentlemen understand coexistence? It turns out that both have to reexamine “traditional values,” namely: to permit government interference “in the heretofore free play of forces of Western society,” to weaken the absolute role of the leadership of the Communist parties in the East (Deutsche Welle, 30 October). It is clear that similar recommendations are directed at undermining the very foundation of the Soviet system and the system of the socialist countries.

Thus, all the pseudo-scientific concepts of the debunkers of Marxism-Leninism have one common goal—on the one hand, to convince listeners of the stability of capitalism and, on the other, in the “inevitability” of restoring capitalist procedures in the socialist camp.

Apologia for “the advantages of the Western political system” along with anti-Communist propaganda play no small role in the programs of

Western radio stations, as has already been said. The Voice of America, BBC, and Deutsche Welle take special pains in this. For example, Washington radio [Voice of America, 7 November, the Forum program. A report by H. Luce, the Editor-in-Chief of *Time* Inc. on the topic "Foodstuffs and civilization."—*note in original document*], trying to present several temporary difficulties in Soviet agricultural production as "organically inherent" to a socialist economy in general, stated: "The contrast between the production of foodstuffs in America and the USSR is almost a laboratory example on the basis of which one can assess the relative progress of both political systems and come to the conclusion: Communism is incompatible with the production of foodstuffs and possibly with efficient production in general. This experience shows convincingly that the welfare of the country, from the material point of view, is chiefly determined by its political institutions and the world view on which they are based." In another of its programs [Voice of America, 6 October, conversation with Prof. D. Kolman on the topic "The US Economy Today"—*note in original document*], the Voice of America glorifies the private property principles of the American economy and ethics, stressing that the US government supposedly defends the consumer from dishonest advertising and the dominance of monopolies. In an "equal-opportunity society" Washington propaganda suggests that "in the center stands a free person, left to his own devices, reaping the fruits of his labors and responsible for his own mistakes." He who can sell his labor or his land profitably, or profitably invest his capital, prospers.

As regards the USSR and the socialist countries, then their political system "did not lead to abundance" and in this connection they are faced with a very important choice "between national interests and ideology" (BBC, 18 October).

Thus, the statement that "Communism has not justified itself" is a recurrent theme in a majority of the materials broadcast by Western radio stations with a certain purpose.

The same theme is constantly heard in commentaries devoted to an analysis of relations in the "developing nations-West-East" triangle. The ideological strategists of capitalism most often fear that the developing nations of Asia, Africa, and Latin America will embark on the path to socialism and complete independence. The achievements of the USSR and socialist countries are categorized by Western radio propaganda as "achieved at the price of too many great hardships." Therefore, "if developing countries are ready to tolerate the social consequences," the

Voice of America stressed on 3 November 1966, then the quickest route to industrialization is the employment of capitalist methods.” Touching on the new Five-Year Plan for the development of the Soviet economy, BBC, for example, noted that it envisions the creation of such a complex and developed economy that “it is difficult for one to imagine how the Russian system can continue to be attractive to revolutionary leaders of underdeveloped countries.” Fabrications about “the Soviet export of Communism” to these countries, citing Cuba as an example, are added to such arguments. In such cases the Island of Freedom is depicted as a “bridgehead” to extend the influence of Communism to Latin America.

Trying to promote the US in the role of champion of the interests of young countries and as an enemy of colonialism, the Voice of America admitted at the same time that the new countries of the tropical regions of the world do not have enough capital, not because they are poor in resources, but because “until recently most of the capital was in the hands of the European powers, which were interested only in exploiting all the riches of these regions with minimal capital investment.” As a result, Washington radio notes, new countries which have received independence “ended up less suited than others to solve urgent economic problems without the resources necessary to do this.”

Source: State Archives of the Russian Federation GARF.F.R-6903. Op. 3. D 351. L. 2–14. Obtained by Vladimir Tolz. Translation by Gary Goldberg.

Document No. 18: 1967. Memo to Central Committee on
Propaganda Conducted by Foreign Radio Stations in Russian

This memo from N. Mesyatsev, Chairman, Broadcast and Television Committee, Council of Ministers, analyzes Western radio "propaganda" and credits Western broadcasts with being "an effective tool of ideological intervention." The document notes that the broadcasts pay attention to Soviet dissidents, and mentions their use of humor and Western music.

Secret

Copy No.1

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CPSU CC

Enclosed is a brief note on the areas of major focus of the propaganda conducted by foreign radio stations in Russian.

At present, the total volume of broadcasting of the ten major enemy radio stations, relaying in Russian, consists of around 60 hours per day. These radio stations cover practically the entire territory of the Soviet Union. Broadcasting is mostly conducted on short waves.

Radio stations of the USA, GDR, France, Japan and others run their programs only on short waves.

ATTACHMENT: 6 pages of text, mb.264-sch, copy no. 4,
secret; copy no. 5—add to a deed

[signed] N. Mesyatsev

14 April 1967

No. 317C

Note

Material is for information purposes only.

Used by the Directorate for work.

[signed] P. Moskovsky

Deputy Secretary of the Propaganda Directorate of the CPSU CC

27 April 1967

[signed] T. Kuprikov

Deputy Secretary of the Directorate[Stamped: Not for publication]

Secret
Copy No. 4

Ideological Subversion on the Airwaves of Foreign
Radio Stations Broadcasting in the Russian Language

At present, as acknowledged by the bourgeois ideologists, WESTERN RADIO PROPAGANDA is the most formidable and effective tool of ideological intervention of imperialism in the USSR. The purpose of such penetration is to convince the Soviet people to question the expediency and attainment of goals put forth by the CPSU and the Soviet government, to discredit the internal and foreign policy of the USSR in the eyes of the listeners, and to disrepute the theory and practice of Communism.

A wide array of propagandist means is used to influence Soviet listeners, ranging from materials containing all kinds of fabrications about the life of the Soviet people, and gross slander on public and state order in the USSR, which are aimed at under-informed listeners, to discussions and lectures, whose authors pretend to be “scholarly” critics of communism addressing the Soviet intelligentsia, students, and religious believers in the USSR. Programs that incessantly advertise the so-called Western way of life—particularly bourgeois culture and the high level of economic development in capitalistic countries—serve the same purpose. Anti-Soviet jokes are also part of this game. Airtime is filled with music that is considered unsuitable for Soviet entertainment.

Programs distort INTERNAL AFFAIRS of the USSR and emphasize materials that cast aspersions on public and state order of the Soviet Union, which is usually characterized as “totalitarian.” Our one-party system comes under the fiercest attack. Listeners are being told that the USSR lacks elementary democratic freedoms, such as freedom of speech, press, assembly, freedom of religion, freedom of movement, genuine representation of elective bodies, etc.

In support of their fabrications, radio stations have recently broadcast the following programs:

About the publication in Italy of *Into the Whirlwind* by Yevgenia Ginzburg, a teacher from Moscow, who describes the Stalinist purges (Voice of America); about the trial of a young poet from Moscow, V. Tolstov, “for his participation in demonstrations against reactionary measures by the government with regard to the Soviet intelligentsia” (BBC); about *The White Book* of Sinyavsky and Daniel, compiled by [Aleksandr] Ginzburg (Italian radio); prohibition of exhibits by the painter M. Chagall (Deutsche Welle) and others. A lot was said about the “tragic fate” of Sinyavsky, Daniel, and Pasternak, as well as the “unconstitutional behavior of the Soviet government” in its treatment of the religious and legal rights of Jews and other believers living in the USSR. In such a way listeners are led to believe that the country’s Constitution is being violated.

Particularly hostile attacks are directed against Party principles that constitute the basis of the Soviet state. The work of the CPSU in all spheres of public and state life of the USSR, is portrayed as “excessive,” “conservative,” hindering further development of democratization of socialist order and public interaction.

Radio stations dedicate a fair amount of material to the economic situation in the USSR. The Soviet planned economy is represented as “rigid” and “unprofitable.” Listeners are led to believe that the economic reforms currently under way in the USSR have a “fragmentary nature and therefore little effect,” and that with the approval of a new Five-Year Plan “preference will be given to the defense industry, which will lower the standard of living of the population.”

The Western practice of anti-Soviet radio propaganda circulates the inflammatory thesis about an alleged conflict in Soviet society between “new forces, and the faceless, but nevertheless almighty bureaucracy, entrenched in the administration and leadership of the CPSU” (Voice of America).

Radio stations strive to depict the FOREIGN POLICY of the USSR as “expansionist,” as a manifestation of “Soviet imperialism.” Thus, Deutsche Welle has been insisting that the Soviet leadership “is entertaining the notion of nuclear war and its resulting advantages.”

Policy of the USSR towards the socialist countries is also grossly distorted. Among the qualities ascribed to [Soviet policy] is the aspiration to gain “hegemony” in the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON) and in the leadership of the Warsaw Pact, a desire to “shape the foreign policy of Eastern European countries—particularly with respect to the German question—in Soviet interests.”

Recently, the upcoming 50th anniversary of SOVIET RULE has marked an increase in the volume of messages and commentaries demonstrating acute anti-Soviet tendencies. A number of programs containing conversations and interviews with various eye-witnesses of events that took place in February and October 1917 in Russia (with A.F. Kerensky, P. Sorokin and others), and also statements by the bourgeois press grossly distort the role played by V.I. Lenin and the Bolshevik Party in the February Revolution as well as during the days of October 1917. In particular, they claim that although the February Revolution was a "spontaneous and disorganized revolt of the people," it was the only "true" revolution. As concerns the October revolution, according to Deutsche Welle, it was "inspired by the Bolsheviks, who exploited the weaknesses of democracy and forced Russia to follow the Bolshevik path."

Alongside critical commentaries, the events of 1917 are being misrepresented, and increasingly more materials about "Stalin's purges" in the 1930s and "insufficient de-Stalinization in the Soviet Union" are beginning to appear (Deutsche Welle).

Radio stations often use sensational materials. As a pretext to making another propagandist racket, for instance, they reported on S. Alliluyeva's life abroad. It was noted, in particular, that S. Alliluyeva's decision to "stay in the West would come as a hard blow to the prestige of the CPSU, especially at the time of the 50th anniversary of the October Revolution."

Another example: occasionally information is reported about the collapse of a Soviet spy network in one country or another.

The permanent theme of broadcasts by Western radio stations continues to insist on the "loss by the CPSU" of a leading position in the WORLD COMMUNIST MOVEMENT. Anti-Soviet propaganda by the People's Republic of Korea is widely used for this purpose.

The radio stations direct their efforts at discrediting and distorting the THEORY AND PRACTICE OF COMMUNISM. Thus, bourgeois ideologists accuse Communists of a "genetic" inability to rule justly and democratically for the benefit of the people, by distorting the teachings of Marxism-Leninism on the matters of socialist state and the equality of nations. The consequence of such a situation in the country, according to the BBC, is that "the Soviet people have been governed by terror and deception for almost 30 years."

The radio programs keep insisting that the teachings of Marxism-Leninism "have become outdated and converted into a dogma." In addition,

they call for a revision and reassessment of Marxism, which supposedly is falsely interpreted in the USSR and socialist countries.

The programs intensely propagate various theories about a gradual rebirth of the socio-political and economic structure of socialist countries, about the emergence of a new class in those countries, i.e. an “elite of scholars and specialists,” to whom power is drifting.

Side by side with anti-Communist propaganda, apologetics of “the advantages of the Western political system and economic principles of the free market” play a sizeable role in programs of Western radio stations too. Striving to present temporary difficulties in the agricultural production of the USSR as “genetically implied” in a socialist economy, Voice of America, for example, provided such a summary: “Communism is incompatible with effective production. The experience of the USSR proves that the well-being of the state, from a material point of view, is first and foremost determined by political institutions and the mindset upon which they are founded.”

The programs of radio stations are filled with materials portraying the “high standard of living” of people in capitalist countries, who are supposedly fully enjoying the “civil and spiritual liberties of Western-style democracy.”

Anti-Soviet propaganda from the capitalist states has a lot in common with propaganda from Chinese radio stations.

Like Western stations, almost every program on BEIJING RADIO contains slander on the activities of the CPSU and Soviet government in areas of international and domestic politics. More often than not, such materials abound in overt profanity.

As concerns the internal affairs of the USSR, the radio station claims that “democracy does not exist, terror is apparent, and the government apparatus has been bureaucratized” in the country. One of the programs made the following statement: “By hastening the restoration of capitalism inside the country, a revisionist Soviet group has encouraged the penetration of the monopolistic capital of the USA into the USSR, subjecting working people to exploitation by foreign capitalists.”

The latest programs lead listeners to believe in the “profound contradictions between views of the Soviet people and the goals of the revisionist leadership.” On multiple occasions the following appeal was made: “There will be a day when Soviet people will rise up in revolt against the ruling group of revisionists.”

Beijing radio strives to present Maoism as the sole plausible scientific theory, while accusing the Soviet Union of “perverting and undermining Marxist-Leninist teachings.” Many programs claim that the center of world communist movement has supposedly moved to Beijing.

The foreign policy of the Soviet Union is characterized as a “system of acts directed at collusion with imperialism and international opposition.” Program after program states that “the actions of the Soviet leadership bear witness to its aspiration to undermine and suffocate the Vietnamese people’s struggle for freedom.” To substantiate their claims, radio propagandists in Beijing often resort to citing the bourgeois press regarding the fact that “Moscow has recently undertaken measures to inspire peaceful negotiations with Vietnam.”

The programs underscore the following: “The fault for straining and aggravating Sino-Soviet relations lies with the Soviet Union.”

* * *

The aforementioned leads to the conclusion that in conducting their ideological subversion on the airwaves, propagandists exploit themes and concerns that the Soviet press cannot discuss.

Source: Archives of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Obtained by Michael Nelson. Translated by Volodymyr Valkov.

Document No. 19: 1968. Memo to Central Committee on Western Radio Propaganda against the USSR

This document discusses Western radio programming aimed at the intelligentsia and dissidents, and cites the use of samizdat by Western broadcasters.

Secret

Copy No. 1

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CPSU CC

The amount of materials in the Western radio programs directed at creating an impression among Soviet people that socialist countries have “had a wave of demonstrations by intelligentsia protesting against violations of the rule of law and encroachment on liberties proclaimed in the constitution” has significantly increased lately. According to the Voice of America, “calls for freedom of expression have become a universal concern in Communist countries.”

Foreign radio stations continue to maintain that “the conflict between the progressive intelligentsia and the dogmatists of the Party apparatus on the issue of freedom of speech has intensified” in the USSR. In a more concentrated fashion than before, radio propagandists lead listeners to believe that the “violence of Stalinism could return.” The BBC and Deutsche Welle claim that “several letters have appeared in the USSR warning of a possible repression against liberal circles of Soviet intelligentsia to enforce compulsory observance of the Party agenda.”

The Voice of America broadcast long excerpts from a publication in the foreign press entitled “Appeal to Soviet Intelligentsia by P. Yakir, Y. Kima, and I. Gabania,” which ends with the following words: “Your every moment of silence is another step toward a trial of Daniel and Ginzburg. Little by little, your silent acquiescence might lead to another 1937.” Its programs also mention a “letter from a young Ukrainian journalist, Chernovol.”

As stated in the programs, “all these protests stem from violations of the rule of law” in the case of [Aleksandr] Ginzburg et al., and in the case of Bukovsky. The Voice of America broadcast that the majority of Soviet

people consider these convicts to be “persons who dared to preserve their dignity, who dared to think and disagree.”

As in the past, such programs name Solzhenitsyn, Yevtushenko and Voznesensky, who are described as “the fearless champions of freedom of creative humanity and honesty in art.”

Developing this idea, radio stations speculate about the “threat of terror by security services that are preparing an attempt to subdue writers’ resistance” (BBC).

The Voice of America pays even closer attention in its programs to evidence that, by publishing works in the West and disseminating them by means of “samizdat,” it is possible to “convey genuine facts, ideas, and art to our contemporaries.”

At the same time, by informing Soviet listeners of “even harsher protests by the intelligentsia in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia,” radio stations are trying to impose the following conclusion: “Cultural repression in the USSR and other Eastern European countries stems not from a shift to orthodox Marxism, but from the general policy direction of the Party and state apparatus in those countries” (Voice of America).

Chairman,
Broadcast and Television Committee,
Council of Ministers, USSR

Dossier No. 128e
16.II.68

[signed]
N. Mesyatsev

Propaganda Directorate of the CPSU CC has considered the memorandum. The material is used for work purposes.

Secretary of the Propaganda Directorate of the CPSU CC
[signed] Moskovsky

28.V.1968 9 Deputy Secretary of the Propaganda
29 May 1968 Directorate of the CPSU CC

[signed] Kuprikov

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Source: Archives of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Obtained by Michael Nelson. Translated by Volodymyr Valkov.

Document No. 20: 1968. KGB Report to Central Committee on RL Policy Guidelines

The KGB informs the Central Committee of RL policy guidelines concerning programs dealing with the USSR. While the first paragraph indicates "Free Europe," the content of the note makes clear that Radio Liberty is meant. The original memorandum on which the note was based [a copy could not be located in the RFE/RL archives for comparison—editors] was probably taken from Radio Liberty headquarters in Munich.

USSR
Committee for State Security
Council of Ministers

Top Secret
3595[8]

16 December 1968

No. 2789z

Moscow

CPSU CC

Recommendations prepared by the US special services for the radio station Free Europe [sic] in December 1968 provide the following guidance regarding programs focusing on foreign and domestic policies of the USSR.

Programs that deal with foreign policy should consistently underline that the development of the modern international situation was profoundly influenced by the entry of troops from the five Warsaw Pact countries into Czechoslovakia, bringing to naught the softening in relations between the East and the West that has been achieved with great difficulty in the last few years, and threatening the future of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The programs should make it clear that the policy of the Soviet leadership to violently suppress the slightest signs of independence creates a threat of military intervention in Romania, Yugoslavia, Albania and other countries, which could have a pernicious effect on the entire world. In addition, it is necessary to persuade listeners that NATO members are already implementing measures to consolidate their military and defense capabilities in order to be able to repel possible Soviet aggression.

The radio station should underline that all aspects of Soviet foreign policy are secondary in comparison with the issue of Czechoslovakia. Despite the constructive role played by the Soviet Union in putting a stop to American bombing of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the USA and other Western countries will not be able to resume normal relations with the Soviet Union until the Czechoslovak question is satisfactorily resolved.

It is also necessary to make clear that events in Czechoslovakia have negatively affected many Communist countries. The majority of Communist Parties, including the French and Italian, have expressed the view that the Soviet Union is making a mistake by suppressing liberal reforms which are absolutely necessary for communist governments to be viable in the twentieth century.

With respect to this, it should be underlined that the Soviet Union is facing formidable resistance from the people of Czechoslovakia and seems unable to come up with a solution to its policy in Czechoslovakia.

It should be pointed out that in recent years the international community has considered the USSR to be a country that "truly strives to ease international tension," but events in Czechoslovakia have done enormous damage to the prestige of the Soviet Union.

The principle thesis of the programs dealing with the domestic policies of the Soviet Union should be that there is an increasing demand for the rule of law and freedom of information in the Soviet Union, and that it is closely linked with events in Czechoslovakia.

The programs should underline that the struggle of the Soviet intelligentsia for the rule of law and freedom of information exemplified in a number of overt protests is a sign of hope that the Politburo and Central Committee of the CPSU have not yet made a final decision regarding the process of liberalization both in the USSR and Czechoslovakia. Nevertheless, the plenary session of the CC CPSU in April has shown that the Soviet leadership does not intend to make any concessions, but is instead preparing an ideological counter-attack.

The programs should promote the liberalization movement in the Soviet Union as a sentiment that is shared not only by a thin layer of Soviet intelligentsia, but also by the masses.

The efforts of the Soviet leadership to resolve ideological problems at a plenary session in April have not produced desirable results. This is evident in the fact that Academician SAKHAROV'S "Reflections on Progress, Peaceful Coexistence and Intellectual Freedom" ap-

peared two months after the plenum. His views are shared by many of his colleagues.

It is worth noting that the Soviet leadership, being dissatisfied with the views prevailing among youth and students, decided to implement certain changes in the operation of the Komsomol by adopting policies to intensify ideological teachings. Nevertheless, the Soviet leadership is facing difficulties in adopting such policies due to information that is coming from abroad, depriving it of its main ideological weapon—monopoly of information.

It is necessary to emphasize that the Soviet people's increased demand for respect of the rule of law and the Soviet constitution is linked with the renewed protests by Crimean Tatars and other nationalities speaking out against the infringement of their rights.

In addition to the factual data on the economy of the USSR and the improved well-being of the Soviet people, programs about the economic situation in the Soviet Union should stress that in general the economic development of the Soviet Union is moving at a slower pace than in 1966–1967. Besides the “inversion of bureaucracy,” the unstable standards, the poor supply system, and the limited rights of businessmen that hamper economic reforms, the events in Czechoslovakia have disturbed transportation and reduced commodity turnover within the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON).

Programs regarding agriculture should point out that, despite some improvement, such important concerns as organizing the third All-Union Congress of farmers and adopting a new statute for agricultural cooperatives are not being addressed. It should be noted that there is presently a tendency toward reducing appropriations for agriculture, which could have unfavorable consequences.

Programs regarding the standard of living of the Soviet people should underline that material needs are being poorly met, despite high consumer solvency and demand. A sharp increase in the number of deposits in savings banks provides good evidence.

The Soviet economy and general well-being of the Soviet people could have been in much better shape if the Soviet leadership had not implemented policies that aggravated the international situation, and if it had rejected the arms race that is consuming enormous resources at the expense of industry and agriculture.

Recommendations provide the following guidance to national editorial boards:

RUSSIAN EDITORIAL BOARD. Along with reporting on the most significant events of domestic and foreign policy of the USSR, [it should] launch a new series called “Genuine History of the Personality Cult.” Special episodes should be dedicated to STALIN’S birthday and BERIA’S execution. [It should] produce two episodes for the program “The Right to Know”—on such topics as freedom of information, censorship, etc., and “Eye-witnesses and Documents,” dedicated to witness testimonies and documents relating to events in the USSR. [It should] renew the press review entitled “Books and Authors” to acquaint listeners with new releases in the West about Soviet Union and its problems.

UKRAINIAN EDITORIAL BOARD. Launch a new series about Ivan Dziuba, Kiev-based author, and the Sakharov letter. Produce programs about “Stalin’s methods in our time in Ukraine,” especially about Party control of literature. Continue series about human rights and the history of Ukraine.

BELARUS EDITORIAL BOARD. Continue series “Economic Challenges of Belarus,” “Belarus Today” and “Contemporary Belarus Literature and Culture.” Moreover, produce a special program dedicated to problems of the BSSR.

ARMENIAN EDITORIAL BOARD. Continue programs about political and public life in Armenia, its problems in the areas of economy, science, culture, arts, and literature. Several programs should be dedicated to the 48th anniversary of Soviet Armenia.

Deputy Chairman of the Committee for state security, USSR
Council of Ministers

[signed] N. Zakharov

NOTE No. 35958

Propaganda Directorate CC CPSU has been informed.

Deputy Secretary of the Directorate
CPSU CC

[signed] A. Dmytruk

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29.I.1969

In the archive of P. Kuznetsov (illegible)
29.I.69

Source: Archives of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Obtained by Michael Nelson. Translated by Volodymyr Valkov.

II.

Regime Countermeasures against Western Broadcasters

Soviet Bloc

Document No. 21: 1976. Bloc Intelligence Organs Take Joint Countermeasures against RFE and RL

This GDR document is a German translation of the draft Action Program of Countermeasures against RFE and RL which was discussed at a multilateral meeting of Bloc intelligence services (minus Romania) in Prague in February 1976. The Prague meeting was suggested by the Czechoslovak interior ministry but dominated by the Soviet Union. Oleg Kalugin, then in charge of KGB counterintelligence, gave the opening speech (no copy of which could be located). Some of the measures listed in the Action Program, such as disinformation, were implemented. Others, such as a public tribunal to condemn the Radios, were never pursued.

Translation from Russian
TOP SECRET!
Draft

The representatives of the intelligence organs of the PRB, HPR, GDR, PPR, USSR and CSSR, who met on 12–13 February 1976 in Prague exchanged experience on active measures, both completed and in preparation, against the centers of ideological subversion, the radio stations Free Europe (RFE) and Radio Liberty (RL), and came to the conclusion that minimum objective for the short term was the necessity to expel the US centers of subversion in the form of RFE and RL from the European continent. The optimal goal would consist of their total liquidation.

To achieve this goal, it seems pertinent to implement the following measures:

I. Active Measures

The measures against RFE and RL exposing them as ideological subversive centers of the USA working under the direction of the CIA are to be continued. For this purpose, mass communication media, radio and TV of the countries of the socialist community are to be deployed with the purpose of publicizing information among the international public that compromise the enemy. In particular, it is planned:

- for Czechoslovak intelligence to publish a book that would implicate the stations RFE and RL as well as the CIA by using the documents obtained by Major MINAŘIK and Col. CZECHOWICZ and other materials available to the intelligence agencies of the socialist countries;
- to continue the publication of articles and public appearances in socialist and capitalist countries of Major MINAŘIK, who has returned from RFE to the CSSR, taking advantage of the possibilities at the disposal of the intelligence organs in an effort to expose the participation of RFE in subversive activities of anti-socialist forces in the socialist countries;
- for Soviet intelligence to publish a book which uses materials from the American press to expose the activities of the CIA, RFE and RL;
- for the Czechoslovak service to publish a collected volume of documentary material from the intelligence services of the socialist countries which expose the subversive activities of RFE and RL as well as of those persons who work in the centers of ideological subversion;
- to publish an APN [Novosti Press Agency] brochure in German and English with articles from the Soviet media on RFE and RL, and distribute this brochure in the West, especially in the FRG and the USA, other NATO countries and neutral European countries;
- with the help of the security organs of the socialist countries to produce documentaries and movies which expose the subversive activities of RFE and RL.

International public opinion has to be mobilized for the purpose of ending the criminal activities of RFE and RL as hotbeds of ideological subversion whose existence is in contradiction with international law and the Helsinki Final Act.

Taking into consideration the forces and possibilities of the security organs of the PRB, HPR, GDR, PPR, USSR and CSSR the following measures are to be implemented for this purpose:

- On the territory of Austria, Operation Spider, designed to make the countries participating in the Helsinki Conference aware of the legal basis of the illegality of RFE and RL, is to be completed;
- Regarding this issue, interventions are to be inspired in the Bundestag of the FRG; the sending of letters to American Members of Congress and statements by progressive groups and press agencies to the US government, the embassies of the US, the FRG *et al* are to be organized;
- The attention of the international public is to be drawn to US attempts to force the NATO countries to finance RFE and RL thereby legalizing the stations as international organs of ideological subversion.

The question of holding a public tribunal against RFE and RL on the territory of a socialist country (CSSR, GDR, or another socialist country to be agreed on) [is to be examined], featuring the participation of renowned international law experts, well-known figures from socialist and Western countries, former employees of these centers who were ordered back from the West (CZECHOWICZ, LACH, SMOLINSKI—PPR, MARIN—USSR, MINAŘIK—CSSR and others), people who used to work there, selected citizens who came under the influence of the radio stations, and using documentary materials from all socialist intelligence services.

According to the participants in the meeting the tribunal should take place no later than the third quarter of 1976.

Implementing measures to isolate the radio stations Free Europe and “Liberty” in the international arena, including international (UN, UNESCO, IOC) and national organizations, centers, societies, and associations, [by characterizing them] as subversive agencies, whose activities in the spirit of the Cold War stand in contrast to détente, and the strengthening of cooperation among countries of a different social order.

In order to disorganize the internal activities of RFE and RL and exert psychological pressure on its employees, factors such as the following have to be actively exploited:

- Competition between RFE and RL for the dominant position within the system of the “US Council on International Broadcasting [Board for International Broadcasting—editors];”

- Displays of nationalist tendencies and statements of hostility between the “national desks;”
- Zionization of departments of RFE and RL and the hostile attitudes of members of the stations against overwhelming Jewish forces, primarily against former citizens of socialist countries of Jewish nationality;
- Preparation and mailing of letters from the employees who have been ordered back [to the East] from the radio stations to their former colleagues at RFE and RL.

II. Unofficial-operative activities

Coordinated targeted use of existing possibilities of the intelligence services of the PRB, HPR, GDR, PPR, USSR and CSSR for obtaining documentary data and unofficial materials relating to such basic questions as:

- Objectives, tasks, forms and methods of RFE and RL activities, their role in uniting all antisocialist forces. Role of the radio stations in the policy of the USA and NATO;
- Facts on the intervention in internal matters of the socialist countries and the violation of the sovereignty of the FRG. Falsification of materials. Harsh attacks against the Party and government leaders of the countries of the socialist community;
- Role and position of the US intelligence agencies in the subversive activity of RFE and RL: spies; persons known to be or suspected of being agents; the system of obtaining information; participation in the development and conceptualizing of broadcasts, in the financing of the stations generally and of individual operations. The internal situation in the objects: contradictions between RFE and RL, national rivalries and their protagonists, unofficial-operative situations resulting from the exposing measures of the intelligence agencies of the socialist countries, control and spying on employees and others;
- Mutual help of the fraternal intelligence services in assessing operative targets which come to the attention of the unofficial employees [of the Soviet bloc security services]. Assignment of proven agencies with the task of systematically analyzing all enumerated issues relating to the activities of the radio stations and drafting proposals for the discrediting and exposing [of the stations];

- Regular assessments of the reaction of the enemy to the active measures of the socialist countries and of the countermeasures undertaken by [the stations].

In contact with the counterintelligence agencies, strengthening of the unofficial positions of the intelligence agencies of the PRB, HPR, GDR, PPR, USSR and CSSR within RFE and RL by using such possibilities as:

- Working on employees of the stations by the agencies, including by trusted officials of the counterintelligence services, to effect defection or compromising [of the employees];
- Infiltration into RFE and RL of persons from the nationalist emigration, Zionists and dissidents. In this regard, existing possibilities are to be examined and additional ones are to be created;
- Preparation of unofficial employees by the security agencies for prolonged deployment with the objective of penetrating the enemy's centers of ideological subversion;
- In the short-term, targeted deployment by the security agencies of unofficial employees with the most potential in capitalist countries, with the objective of obtaining information and working on specific persons from the ranks of RFE and RL employees;
- Using the possibilities of the intelligence and counterintelligence agencies of the socialist countries to counter the subversive activity of the enemy on the territory of the countries of the socialist community (uncovering agents, dissidents and persons with contacts to RFE and RL; organizing of persons who will be "set up;" intercepting of communication channels and materials; implementing operational actions, etc.). If necessary this work is to be conducted jointly with the relevant service units of the respective security agencies of the socialist countries;
- Regular exchange of general and documentary materials, under the obligatory proviso that the receiving party coordinates in advance the possibilities and permissible manner of their use.

Measures at the diplomatic level

The conference considered it useful to propose to the leaderships of the security agencies of the socialist countries that they, together with the foreign ministry of each of the socialist countries, launch measures at a po-

litically appropriate moment against the USA and the FRG regarding the subversive activities of RFE and RL.

In the case of a public tribunal against RFE and RL, the questions is to be examined as to whether there should be any representation undertaken by the foreign ministries of the socialist countries with regard to the governments of the USA and the FRG.

Organizational questions

The initiator of the meeting will communicate a draft text for a work plan to the leaderships of the intelligence agencies of the PRB, HPR, GDR, PPR, USSR and CSSR, which, if necessary, will make revisions and additions and communicate these to the initiator of the conference.

Prague, 13 February 1976

*Source: BStU, Berlin. MfS HAX 541. Obtained by A. Ross Johnson.
Translated by Christian Ostermann.*

Document No. 22: 1976. Bulgarian Interior Ministry
Account of Meeting in Prague

*A Bulgarian Interior Ministry account of the Prague meeting on RFE and
RL that was discussed in the previous document.*

Strictly Confidential!

Copy No. 2

[Seal: Republic of Bulgaria]

INFORMATION

[Stamp: True to the original
Secretary: signature]

REGARDING: The meeting of the fraternal intelligence services held in Prague on the 13th and the 14th of February 1976

On the 13th and 14th of February 1976 a meeting of the intelligence services of the USSR, PRB, PPR, HPR, GDR, and CSSR was held in Prague. Participating in the meeting were: representing the USSR, the head of counterintelligence at PGU-KGB [The First Chief Directorate of the Committee for State Security], Major-Gen. KALUGIN and the head of the V [Fifth] Chief Directorate of KGB; representing PRB, the deputy head of the VI [Sixth] Directorate VI-DS [Bulgarian State Security], and the head of the IV [Fourth] Directorate at PGU-DS [The First Chief Directorate of Bulgarian State Security]; also present were the heads of the directorates for Ideological Subversion and Active Measures (*aktivny meropriatiya*) of the intelligence services of the other fraternal countries.

The goal of the meeting was to discuss joint actions and projects for the further denunciation of the work of radio stations "RADIO FREE EUROPE" and "RADIO LIBERTY."

Major-Gen. GLADIK [phonetic spelling], head of the CSSR intelligence service, opened the meeting and led the main plenary sessions. The first deputy head, Colonel DOVINA [phonetic spelling] led the remaining sessions.

During the first day, two main reports were presented: by the deputy head of the first directorate of the MVR [Ministry of Internal Affairs] of CSSR, Colonel FRIBORT [phonetic spelling] on the topic: "On the Present Circumstances and Possibilities for Activating Work on RADIO FREE EUROPE and RADIO LIBERTY" and by Major-Gen. Kalugin of PGU-KGB on the topic: "On the Operative Circumstances and Major Directions of the Work of the Fraternal Intelligence Services against RADIO LIBERTY and RADIO FREE EUROPE."

In addition to comrade KALUGIN's report, a plan of action was put forward for discussion at the meeting. For the rest of the first day, delegates made statements regarding the activity of the radio stations and the opportunities for carrying out activities in the spirit of the reports presented.

Our delegation made a thorough statement on the basis of information prepared in advance by PGU-DS.

At the end of the plenary session, a committee was formed to summarize statements and prepare a draft proposal regarding joint activities of the intelligence services of the fraternal countries against the two radio stations.

On the second day, the draft proposal was examined in detail, discussed, and accepted.

In the process of examination, some objections were raised by the Polish delegation, which claimed that it lacked the authority to assent to some of the activities included in the proposal. At the start of the discussion, our delegation was the first to take a stance on the draft proposal, by emphasizing the worth of it and fully supporting it. Similar statements by other delegations, except the Polish one, followed, and, at the end of the plenary session, after several clarifications, [the Polish delegation] also accepted the proposal.

It was decided that the prepared draft should be sent by the Czechoslovak comrades, according to established procedures, to all fraternal intelligence services for discussion and possible correction, after which it would be finally confirmed.

In private meetings, following the end of the plenary sessions, comrades General KALUGIN and General GLADIK expressed their satisfaction with the position of our delegation on the draft proposal and thanked us for our overall participation in the meeting.

During their stay in Prague, the delegates met with Captain MINAŘIK, recently returned from RADIO FREE EUROPE; several filmed materials were shown and a number of details were provided on the extraction and the work of the Czechoslovak intelligence agent.

Our delegation held bi-lateral meetings with all delegations to discuss matters of mutual interest. During these we discussed in detail and concurred on some issues in consultation with the Soviet comrades, the preparation of documents for our activities on target “RENGAT” and target “TARZAN,” as well as the publication of documents through their [Soviet] channels. It was agreed that a channel of the Hungarian comrades would be used for publication.

We discussed with the Czech, Polish, and Hungarian delegations [the possibility] of receiving for our use documentary materials acquired by them from RADIO FREE EUROPE.

[We] exchanged expertise on a number of general issues, concerning work in connection with the enemy emigration and ideological subversion.

The following important conclusions can be drawn from the meeting:

1. The meeting, proposed by the Soviet comrades, played a positive role in directing all means of the fraternal intelligence services towards achieving, as a first step, the expulsion of radio stations LIBERTY and FREE EUROPE from Europe, and the complete elimination of the same [radio stations] as an end goal.
2. The multilateral meeting contributed to the strengthening of the relationships among the fraternal services.
3. A draft-proposal regarding the main directions of work was completed and, in principle, the idea of organizing an open trial in one of the socialist countries against RADIO LIBERTY and RADIO FREE EUROPE was accepted.
4. Some concrete issues on activities planned by us regarding targets in RADIO FREE EUROPE were negotiated.

Source: Bulgarian Archives, ANIS, vol.9, inventory 3, entry 95, volume 3, Obtained by Hristo Hristov. Published in Hristov, "The Double Life of Agent Piccadilly" (Sofia: Siela, 2008). Translated from Bulgarian with Hristov's permission by Kristina Terzieva.

Document No. 23: 1978. Bulgarian Gen. Stoyanov Meets
KGB Gen. Bobkov to Discuss RFE and RL

Various countermeasures against RFE and RL were discussed in this meeting, including a possible international trial of the "committee" supporting RFE and RL.

[excerpt]

Top Secret!

REPORT

From Lt. General PETUR STOYANOV,
Chief of VIth Directorate – DS [State Security]

REGARDING: the visit to the USSR of a Bulgarian delegation
from VIth Directorate – DS [State Security]

At the invitation of the leadership of KGB's Vth Directorate, a delegation from VIth Directorate DS [State Security] stayed in Moscow from the 4th to the 9th of July 1978, in order to accept and sign a plan for collaborative counter-intelligence activities [to be carried out] by VIth Directorate DS and KGB's Vth Directorate for the period 1978-1980.

The delegation from VIth Directorate DS consisted of: Lt. Gen. Petur Stoyanov—head, Colonel Naiden Petrov—Chief of Department I, Colonel Angel Tzenov—Chief of Department V, and Colonel Christo Lazarov—Chief of Department VII.

The delegation from KGB's Vth Directorate consisted of: Lt. Gen. F.D. Bobkov—head, Major Gen. Markelov—First deputy chief of KGB's Vth Directorate, Colonel B.C. Strunin—Chief of the Department I, Colonel Olovyanikov—Chief of Department X, Colonel Chertishev P.I.—Chief of Department VI, and Colonel E.D. Zyazin—Deputy Chief of Department.

The comprehensive activity of the Committee of Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe, which unites all enemy forces against the USSR and other fraternal countries, can be felt. Comrade Bobkov emphasizes that, for now, the KGB is falling behind in denouncing this committee. Not

a single collaborator of Radio Liberty has been denounced as being recruited by the enemy's secret services. RL's subversive propaganda has been exposed, but its intelligence activity has not. RL collaborators have been identified and monitored, but they always come up under a different flag, under a different cover. The mechanism of the committee's subversive activity of has not been unveiled and presented. For now, this is an important task facing the KGB. With regard to that, Comrade Bobkov recommended that these questions be put forth for clarification at the trial "Deklarator—78." On the basis of the available data, KGB's Vth Directorate will make an analysis of [RFE/RL's] activity directed against all fraternal countries.

They recommended discussing the possibility of summoning an international court of justice for a trial against the "committee" along with Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe.

The subversive nationalist activity undertaken by Ukrainian and Baltic nationalists, Zionists and Dashnaks, is very acute and dangerous. After the conference in Budapest, a number of their emissaries, who were in affiliation with the Ukrainian and Baltic nationalist centers or [supporters of] Zionism, were convicted and denounced.

The foreign nationalist centers and the Committee on "Radio Liberty" and "Radio Free Europe" actively work to stir up nationalist sentiments, aimed at destroying the unity and solidarity of the nationalities comprising the Soviet Union, and causing dissent among socialist countries.

Measures Taken by the KGB

The main direction of KGB's activity remains prevention, especially through the influence of the intelligence apparatus.

It is very important to conduct joint activities aimed at denouncing the enemy, in order to expose its concrete actions, established centers and individuals who carry out or inspire these activities; by publishing books, using press material, and making documentary and feature films to show on TV and in movie theaters, [it is important to] raise the vigilance of our citizens and to protect many people who are not acquainted with the essence of the enemy's subversive actions.

The Soviet comrades have published around 15 books denouncing RL and RFE, and the "National Labor Union" on human rights. The books are written by good journalists.

Books can be compiled and published jointly, and books published in a given fraternal country can be translated in all fraternal countries.

RL and RFE get very nervous when their collaborators are denounced in the press.

On our Collaboration

Our evaluations coincide. The main thing is that our collaboration is becoming more concrete, and it is yielding tangible results. KGB's leadership gives the same evaluation of our joint work. Our joint plans [help] discipline us and thrust our work forward.

It is necessary to broaden our collaboration in the following directions:

- Closer joint work on cultural and scholarly exchange channels.
- Joint campaigns to denounce the Committee on RL and RFE and other subversive centers.
- Joint work on monitoring individuals suspected of anti-Soviet actions.

Source: Bulgarian Subject Collection, Box 12, Hoover Archives. Obtained by A. Ross Johnson. Translation: Sveta Milusheva; edited by Kristina Terzieva.

Document No. 24: 1979. Bulgarian and Czech Interior Ministries Plan to Cooperate against Foreign Propaganda

This document details a plan for cooperation between the 6th Directorate of the Ministry of the Interior of the People's Republic of Bulgaria and the 10th Directorate of the Federal Ministry of the Interior of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic during the period 1979–1981 against foreign propaganda operations. Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty are singled out.

[Excerpt]

TOP SECRET!

CONFIRMED:

CONFIRMED:

FIRST DEPUTY-MINISTER OF
THE INTERIOR OF THE PEOPLE'S
REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA COLONEL-GENERAL:
(sign. ill.)

FIRST DEPUTY-MINISTER
OF THE INTERIOR OF THE
CZECHO-SLOVAK SOCIALIST
REPUBLIC MAJOR-GENERAL:(sign. ill.)

/Gr. Shopov/

/Jan Hanuliak/

PLAN

[...]

9. Annual exchange of reviews and data on international scientific and cultural congresses, symposia and other important events which are organized on the territory of the People's Republic of Bulgaria, the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and in third countries, and are attended by both Bulgarian and Czechoslovak citizens, as well as representatives of the capitalist countries.

10. Organization of regular meetings to assess the results of the performance of the plan for cooperation.

II.

In their joint struggle against the internal adversary and the subversive activities of ideological, Trotskyite, emigrant, Zionist and other enemy agencies, directed against the People's Republic of Bulgaria, the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the Czech Republic, the Bulgarian and Czechoslovak Socialist Republics, as well as the Czech Republic, are united in a common front.

slovak Socialist Republic and the other countries of the socialist commonwealth, the two directorates shall implement the following tasks and initiatives:

1. Direction of agents for gathering data on emigrants from our countries, working predominantly for Free Europe and "Liberty." Coordination of the infiltration of our agents in the international PEN-Club – London, with the purpose of disclosing its inimical activities.
2. Exchange of data on active emigrants, such as Tsenko Barev, Radoslav Kostovski, Vladimir Kostov, Petar Semerdjiev, Atanas Slavov, Pelikan, Tigrid and Pachman. Operative measures to be undertaken in order to thwart the attempts of the enemy to unite defectors from the socialist countries around *Kontinent* magazine. Agent-operative measures shall be undertaken to disclose and eliminate subversive activity against the People's Republic of Bulgaria and the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, carried out by the emigrant organization BLM (Bulgarian Liberation Movement), by the magazine *Budeshte* (*Future*), which are trying to coordinate their activities with emigrants from the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the other socialist states.

[...]

III.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. The plan, and the activities and agent-operative measures that it sets out, can be complemented or amended following proposals by one of the signatories to the agreement, after coordination with the head of the fraternal agency, and with the consent of the First Deputy Ministers of the Interior.
2. The present plan has been drawn up in four uniform copies, two in Bulgarian and in Czech languages, respectively, as they all shall be equally valid.
3. The plan shall enter into force as of the day of its affirmation and shall be valid until December 31, 1981.

HEAD OF 6TH DIRECTOR-
ATE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR
– PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF
BULGARIA

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL:
(sign. ill.)

HEAD OF 10TH DIRECTOR-
ATE OF THE FEDERAL MIN-
ISTRY OF INTERIOR OF THE
CZECHO-SLOVAK SOCIAL-
IST REPUBLIC

MAJOR-GENERAL:(sign. ill.)

Source: Bulgarian Interior Ministry Archive, Fund 1, Record 12, Document 224. Obtained by Jordan Baev. Translated by Miroslav Vajarov.

Document No. 25: 1980. Statements by KGB Chairman
and Polish and Czech Interior Ministers during Bloc
Meeting on Western Radio

In the statements by KGB Chairman Chebrikov and the Polish and Czech Interior Ministers at the Bloc Meeting held on 23 April 1980 to discuss foreign "hostile actions," including Western radio broadcasting, special attention is given to attempts to form a political opposition in the socialist countries.

Top Secret!

23 April 1980

Report

By the Chairman of the delegation of the Committee for State Security (KGB) of the USSR, General-Colonel V. M. Chebrikov

Dear Comrades!

The present conference is a continuation of the now established and completely justified form of collaboration of the organs of security of the socialist countries concerning the fight against the ideological sabotage of the enemy. Such meetings give us the opportunity to periodically exchange experience, look at the results of the analysis of the operational situation, and develop active measures for the prevention and interception of the subversive acts of the enemy. The present conference will have an important role in coordinating and enhancing the effectiveness of our operations. At this meeting we would also like to discuss further measures of coordination and collaboration in the work of organizing of the Olympic Games in Moscow.

In the battle against ideological sabotage, Soviet security agents are closely guided by the directives and instructions of the Central Committee of the CPSU, bearing in mind the interests of the external and internal politics of the Party, [and] the particulars of the development of the international situation.

The political situation in our country is good. The close unity between the people and the Party, the unbreakable tie between the working

class, the collective peasantry and the intelligentsia, and the cohesion of the nations and nationalities in our country—all of this is a solid foundation of the might of our socialist country.

The organs of the Committee for State Security have at their disposal information concerning actions of the special bureaus of the imperialist countries and the foreign centers for ideological sabotage over the last decade. These years were a period of intense fighting with the enemy. In the conditions of political relaxation, the ideological battle became sharper. Imperialism raised ideological sabotage to the level of national politics. The subversive actions of the enemy's special bureaus in the field of ideology were strengthened.

The special agencies of the imperialist countries give particular attention to attempts to realize plans for ideological sabotage, with the purpose of creating an illegal anti-Soviet opposition in our country. By an initiative of the President of the US, in May 1977, the NATO countries came to a decision to carry out subversive actions by the special bureaus against the countries of the Socialist bloc. In the documents approved by the leaders of the NATO member states at the London conference, it is said that NATO's intelligence organs need to get involved with "destabilizing tendencies and illegal currents in the communist world, to solidify the positions of the dissidents there, and further promote changes in their political systems for the advantage of the West." The espionage agencies of the US and the other imperialist countries have tried persistently to fulfill these plans by consolidating hostile elements into political organizations and groups.

Two years ago, in the operative administration of the CIA, a new department was created whose function consisted of organizing and coordinating the activities of residents in the Socialist Bloc countries that used hostile elements.

Such centers for ideological sabotage as the Committee of the radio stations Liberty and Free Europe, the National Labor Union, the Organization of Ukraine Nationalists, the World Zionist organization, continued to actively participate in carrying out the plans of the enemy to penetrate the USSR's territory, as well as many other foreign, anti-Soviet, nationalist, and ecclesiastical organizations, acting under the leadership and control of the intelligence organs of the imperialist countries.

24 April 1980

Report

By the Chairman of the Delegation from the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the People's Republic of Poland, divisional general Comrade Boguslav Staruha

During the time that has passed since our last conference, the Bureau for State Security at the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Peoples Republic of Poland [PRL] has continued to study the trends of ideological sabotage, the enemy's structure and methods for subversive work and [it has] uncovered the individuals on whom they rely. As the results from the study show, during the period that passed, the further institutionalization of the main centers for ideological activities in the capitalist country was carried out. The enemy gave up its attempts at masking sabotage actions on behalf of public institutions and organizations which supposedly were working outside the country and independently from it.

A characteristic example of this is the radio station Free Europe, which fairly recently demarcated itself from its dependence and ties with the American CIA, and under the title "Committee of Free Europe" proclaimed its feigned independence and autonomy. Now, as a result of its public exposure, it has been forced to admit that from the very beginning it was a unit of the CIA, and at this moment it is an official megaphone of the US government.

The tendencies in the enemy sabotage actions against the socialist countries, mentioned in the section of the preliminary notes, are obvious instruments of the politics of the capitalist countries. That is why the intelligence organs and the subversive ideological centers of the enemy, acting through the diplomatic representatives of the Western countries, journalists, and through individuals participating in international exchange, carry out the task of collecting information concerning the political, economic, and social situation in the Peoples Republic of Poland, with the goal of using it to program their sabotage activities, which are conducted in the following directions:

- attacking the internal situation in our country (using the resources of the radio stations RFE, BBC, the Voice of America, and Deutsche Welle), with the goal of undermining Polish society which is carrying out the program of the 8th party congress;

- indoctrination of the [Western] public via Western mass media resources, by promoting the thesis of the inferiority of the socialist system, its alleged economic crisis, the absence of democratic freedoms, totalitarianism, and so on;
- inspiration, organization, management and financial aid, as well as molding public opinion, with the goal of shielding hostile individuals and anti-socialist elements in our country from repression;
- creating all sorts of committees and institutions in the capitalist countries to sustain antisocialist activities in the PRL (The North American study of Polish issues, The European study of Polish issues, and others), using organizations that already exist (such as Amnesty International), as well as energizing the hostile activities of the Polish political emigration;
- exercising influence over the citizens of the PRL who are temporarily located in the West, with the goal of drawing them into hostile activities and enticing them into participating in anti-socialist actions, to perform the functions of couriers, and so on.

The centers for ideological actions launch attempts at subverting different socialist countries. With this they aim at the goal of creating more favorable conditions for establishing anti-socialist activities in these countries. The constant main direction of the hostile activities of the enemy is to undermine the leadership role of the Party, and our friendly union with the USSR.

The anti-Communist centers provide financial and technical help to anti-socialist groups. Last year we uncovered a transfer of financial resources from the West intended for stimulating anti-socialist activities in our country, for copying devices, as well as for hostile literature, including materials reissued by the West organized by the anti-socialist groups. Several couriers were found, among whom were a journalist from the French Trotskyist center RIES (December 1978), and the Swede Liakvist (February 1980). Their detention caused a wave of protest in the West against our country, as well as against the organs of our national security.

Further, we pinpointed facts about the use of PRL territory to carry out attempts to transfer anti-Communist materials and instructions into neighboring socialist countries, for example, by the earlier mentioned Liakvist to the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the USSR, [also] materials with religious and nationalist content. We informed the security organs of our fraternal countries about all of these instances.

24 April 1980

Report

By the Chairman of the Delegation of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, Comrade Colonel Jan Kovach

The forms of ideological sabotage have significantly changed. If until recently more or less passive propagandistic forms were used to support the oppositionist elements in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, currently this support is becoming more active and its goal is to shape them into a political opposition.

The enemy's centers for ideological sabotage in the West have taken on the task of constantly informing the public in the capitalist countries, in a distorted and slanderous manner, on the state of the political atmosphere in Czechoslovakia, and in this way to exert pressure on members of the Western governments to enlist in the anti-Czechoslovak campaigns.

The enemy's special bureaus and its centers for ideological sabotage also strive to draw in some non-governmental organizations, in order to achieve the creation of different kinds of "committees" and groups, whose activities would be aimed against socialist Czechoslovakia.

These committees and groups, as well as the reactionary emigrants, organize many anti-Czechoslovak and anti-Soviet provocations in the capitalist countries, such as protest rallies in front of the buildings of our country's official representation agencies, different demonstrations, and so on, or else provisions are made for publishing anti-socialist lampoons, using for this such subversive publications as "Index" and "Dialogue" in the German Federal Republic, "Confrontation" in Switzerland, and other similar ones, acting closely with the radio stations Free Europe, Liberty, BBC, The Voice of America. [...]

We give special attention to the timely uncovering of the enemy's intentions concerning the meeting in Madrid. We also want to [share] documents concerning the violation and non-adherence on the part of the capitalist countries to the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

We will also give special attention to churches, church organizations, and religious fanatics and their contact with the Vatican to avoid national politics being disturbed with respect to the church, and so that a tie is not

formed between the reactionary clergy and the anti-socialist groups in the republic.

Many tasks, as in the past, we will perform in close cooperation with you, the counter-intelligence workers in the fraternal countries. They pertain mostly to the tasks relating to the problems of the church; the centers for ideological sabotage; to secure the meeting in Madrid; to undertake [actions against] OUN, NTS, Free Europe, and Liberty; and the most important task: to secure operationally the Olympic Games in Moscow.

Source: Bulgarian Interior Ministry Archive, Fond 22, Record 1, Document 124, Obtained by Jordan Baev. Translated by Sveta Milusheva.

Document No. 26: 1981. Minutes of Meeting between
Czechoslovak and Hungarian Interior Ministry Officials on
the Carlos Terrorist Group and RFE Bomb Attack

A bomb exploded outside the RFE building in Munich on February 21, 1981, severely injuring several employees and causing major physical damage. This document, and others like it, indicate that the Ceaușescu regime commissioned the "Carlos group" to carry out the attack. The Carlos group was then resident in Budapest, and this document indicates that the Hungarian Interior Ministry had advance knowledge of the bombing. The same information, with more cautious conclusions about the future of the Carlos group, is contained in an East German document dated April 28 on GDR interior ministry (MfS) talks with the same Hungarian Interior Ministry delegation, which appears as Appendix A in George R. Urban, Radio Free Europe and the Pursuit of Democracy (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).

The 2nd Administrative Division of the Ministry of the Interior
Department 6

File No. OS-00847

Prague, April 25, 1981

Strictly confidential!

Issue No. 1

5 pp.

International Terrorism

Minutes of the meeting with a representative of the Ministry of the Interior of Hungary, Colonel Varga

Minutes of meeting with Colonel Varga of the Hungarian Ministry of the Interior held at the II. S-SNB building, on the 24th day of April 1981, reporting on the status of our knowledge of the terrorist organization The

Hands of the World Revolution currently active in Hungary, and discussing a draft of countermeasures to be taken against the Carlos terrorist group.

Present were:

Hungarian Ministry of the Interior – Colonel Varga

II. S-SNB – Lt. Colonel DrPH. Jiri Jira, Head of the 5th Department
Lt. Colonel Milan Solnicky, Deputy Head of the 6th Department
Captain Ivo Juska, administrative assistant, 6th Department

Interpreter – 1st Department SNB

Comrade Colonel Varga reported on the activities of the Carlos terrorist group operating in Hungary with its headquarters in Budapest. Three major factors were emphasized:

1. Cooperation of the Carlos terrorist group with the Romanian Ministry of the Interior
2. Recent developments
3. Concrete counterterrorist measures

1. The analysis of the Carlos terrorist group shows that the group cooperates closely with the authorities of the Ministry of the Interior of the Socialist Republic of Romania. It was found that the terrorist organization The Hands of the World Revolution has been supplied by Romania with arms, explosives, passports for countries of the [Warsaw] Pact, and training. To repay these favors, Carlos promised to organize terrorist attacks against Romanian emigrants living in Europe. As proof that Carlos is taking this agreement seriously, he carried out bomb attacks against Romanian citizens in Paris, on February 5 1981, including the apartments of the Romanian writer Nicolas Penescu, Mr. Routs, and Mr. Chescu, a Romanian emigrant living in Cologne. During each of these attacks, explosives detonated and people were injured.

On February 21, 1981 Carlos carried out a bomb attack against the Czechoslovak broadcasting service in Munich, in the building housing Radio Free Europe. The comrades from Hungary have direct proof that this operation was executed at the request of the Romanian Socialist Re-

public. The operation was planned to be carried out a week earlier but for technical reasons was postponed to February 21, 1981. The operation was organized and directed by Steve [Johannes Weinrich, a member of the Carlos group]. All the members of the Carlos group met in Budapest on February 22 1981, one day after the attack. It was confirmed that on that day Carlos telephoned a Romanian representative and informed him of the results of the operation. The Romanian expressed satisfaction. Later on, the leadership of the Carlos group left for Romania and was received there at the highest level. The Romanian government and Ministry of the Interior are interested in further terrorist activities. Our Hungarian comrades provided us with documentation concerning the preparation and execution of the attack against Radio Free Europe.

2. Encouraged by the success, the Carlos group set up a plan for further operations. They intend to carry out attacks against Sadat—in this case Libya is interested.

At present the Carlos terrorist gang is actively engaged in transporting weapons to African countries. They are also interested in anti-terrorist security measures used by different European countries. After the attack on Radio Free Europe at the end of February 1981, the security authorities of the German Democratic Republic arrested a Swiss national, Giorgio Bellini, alias Roberto, born March 25, 1945, the leader of a Swiss terrorist organization. This terrorist group closely cooperates with Carlos and takes part in his operations. Bellini is aware of the terrorist activities against Radio Free Europe, Carlos' connection with the Romanian Socialist Republic, and that Budapest is Carlos' headquarters. Bellini's potential testimony might throw an unfavorable light on the socialist countries. The Hungarian Ministry of the Interior has more evidence about the intentions of the German Federal Republic and Italy to arrest more people who are in contact with Carlos. Also this operation could cast a shadow on socialist countries. It is obvious that under these conditions Carlos' stay on the territory of the socialist countries is becoming dangerous.

The representatives of the Interior Ministries of socialist countries were to meet in Budapest to discuss these important issues. The meeting had to be postponed due to the congresses of the Communist Parties of these countries. Since there are no disagreements among socialist countries regarding concrete radical counterterrorist measures, the Hungarian Ministry of the Interior will liquidate Carlos' group and inform the

Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, the Soviet Union, the German Democratic Republic, and the Bulgarian People's Republic.

Authorities in the German Democratic Republic recently took a completely different position regarding the Carlos group. About a month ago Dr. Gaal discussed the matter with the Hungarian Ministry of the Interior. The German Democratic Republic changed its views in light of Carlos' behavior, and came out in favor of the planned counterterrorist measures. Carlos is no longer interested in visiting the German Democratic Republic [since] there was an argument between Carlos and the GDR authorities. As a result Carlos cannot move freely on the territory of the GDR and is under strict supervision. GDR authorities consulted on the matter with Cuba, which has been known to have very good relations with Carlos (particularly one Cuban security official). According to an unofficial agreement, Carlos is supposed to relocate to a Latin-American country and infiltrate the liberation organizations of Latin America. GDR and Cuba will discuss the plan in the near future, however it is not clear how Cuba will react to the counterterrorist measures aimed at Carlos' group.

Carlos' behavior has not changed. On April 18, 1981 a new casino for foreigners was opened in Budapest. Carlos, Steve, and three other members of the group were among the first visitors. They behaved in a provocative manner, instigated a fight that was dispersed by the Hungarian Ministry of the Interior. Carlos also expressed interest in renting a restaurant in the country where he planned to build a shooting-range and a training camp.

3. Based on the above evidence, the Hungarian authorities will take two weeks to resolve the problem of the Carlos group. The Hungarian authorities will summon Carlos to their offices and let him know that he and his group are not welcome in Hungary, because his activities do not conform to Hungarian policies. He and his group will be asked to move out of Hungary within a certain period of time. He will be told to move out in such a manner that will make it clear to him that his stay in any socialist country will be undesirable. Libya's and Syria's favorable approach to the Carlos group will be taken into consideration during this operation. That's why Carlos will be told that he and his gang may stay in Hungary only for a short period of time or can only drive through.

We do not know how Carlos will react to these measures. He is enjoying his stay in Hungary. He was invited to Romania but he declined to visit since current conditions in Romania are not good for his activities.

The Czechoslovak Ministry of the Interior will inform the Hungarian authorities about the results of these measures.

Recorded by Captain Ivo Juska

Deputy of the Head of the 6th Department, Colonel Solnický

Source AMV C., H-720/svazek c.4, listy 281–285. Obtained by Prokop Tomek and published in his “Target Alpha,” op cit. Translated by Blanka Pasternak.

Document No. 27: 1985. Bulgarian Interior Minister Visits
Moscow to Coordinate Activities against
Foreign Propaganda Operations

This note regarding the results of the visit of a group of Interior Ministry officials to the KGB in Moscow contains a proposal to develop a coordinated plan to discredit RFE and RL.

[Excerpt]

TOP SECRET!

FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE
DEPUTY-MINISTER OF THE IN-
TERIOR AND THE HEAD OF THE
FIRST DIRECTORATE OF STATE
SECURITY

COMRADE DEPUTY-MINISTER,

From 12/16 through 12/20/1985 a group of top operatives from the Interior Ministry, led by the Minister of the Interior, Colonel-General Dimitar Stoyanov, had a meeting and conversations with representatives of various departments of the KGB.

The group was received by Politburo member and KGB chairman Comrade Chebrikov. During the meeting, Comrade Chebrikov made a profound analysis of the international political and operational situation. [...]

[We proposed] the elaboration of a prospective plan of struggle against the emigrant centers.

Dr. Chebrikov said that the idea was good, but that this was quite a difficult task. We need to take more active measures to penetrate the centers, publish materials, expose them, etc.

[We proposed] to elaborate a coordination plan for discrediting Radio "Liberty" and Free Europe.

The proposal was accepted. [...]

DEPUTY-HEAD OF FIRST DIRECTORATE OF STATE SECURITY AND
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT "I"

Major General: (sig.)

/K. Velichkov/

Source: Bulgarian Interior Ministry Archive, Fond 2, Record 4, Document 114. Obtained by Jordan Baev. Translated by Miroslav Vajarov.

Bulgaria

Document No. 28: 1977. Bulgaria Gets Help from KGB to Fight “Ideological Subversion”

This document from the Sixth Directorate of Bulgarian State Security thanks “Soviet comrades” for their assistance in combating hostile propaganda against Bulgaria. It acknowledges the role of State Security in publishing articles in the Bulgarian media “exposing” RFE and RL, and refers to joint Soviet-Bulgarian operations against Western radios.

[Excerpt]

Top Secret!

Dear comrades,

Under current conditions, ideological subversion plays a greater role in the political struggle of contemporary capitalism and in its practical-political subversive activity. The ruling imperialist circles have raised ideological subversion to the level of state policy, transformed it into an important foreign policy function of the imperialist countries. With regard to this, the adversary constantly keeps the escalation of this form of subversive activity, for which it mobilizes all the anti-Communist powers with the purpose of causing damage to the socialist states, intervening in their domestic affairs, infringing upon all the spheres of social life, forming an incorrect view about the class struggle between socialism and imperialism.

The tactical content of the ideological subversion includes the specially organized activities, measures, actions and operations of the en-

emy, which are of a subversive-propagandist and intelligence-organizational nature, and are directed towards exerting hostile impact and influence on the citizens of the socialist countries.

Contemporary anti-Communism and especially anti-Sovietism have become the basis and the main ideological and political content of this form of inimical subversive activity. [...]

We value highly the daily, timely and competent help on the part of the head of the KGB representation in the Bulgarian Interior Ministry, Comrade Savchenko, and the representative of the Fifth Directorate of the KGB in the Sixth Directorate of State Security, Viktor Timofeevich Gostev, who share with us their rich experience and participate directly in the solving of our everyday tasks, with the responsiveness, warmth and attention so characteristic of the Soviet people.

The joint activity on the implementation of the plans for 1972–1974 and 1975–1977 has considerably enriched the experience of the State Security apparatus, and has made possible the carrying out of active agent-operative measures, as a result of which important data was acquired regarding the activities, plans and intentions of the enemy, and advance operations were organized. Together with the First Main Directorate, we achieved certain results with regard to some 30 subversive ideological centers of the enemy, that are carrying out active inimical activity against the USSR and the People's Republic of Bulgaria.

The joint agent and counter-propaganda measures carried out to expose the enemy radio stations Liberty and Free Europe have, to a great extent, disrupted the normal pattern of this center for ideological subversion against our countries. Enemy attempts have been foiled to instigate subversive activities on the territory of the People's Republic of Bulgaria and abroad, during the preparation and holding of the 25th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the 11th Congress of the Bulgarian Communist Party. With the cooperation of State Security, the Bulgarian press has published materials exposing the inimical pro-Western nature of Radio Liberty and Free Europe and their staffers. The Bulgarian TV and radio also broadcast similar materials.

The integration, and therefore the help, of the Soviet Cheka operatives has also directly affected implementation levels. The carrying out of joint measures on specific jointly developed cases has begun. In 1976 alone, KGB and State Security have implemented joint measures on the operative study and development of tens of foreign citizens.

The fraternal help of the KGB apparatus and the deepening of our cooperation has found its expression in the improved results of the work in various lines and directions of the Sixth Directorate. [...]

Source: Bulgarian Interior Ministry Archive, Fond 22, Record 1, Document 62. Obtained by Jordan Baev. Translated by Miroslav Vajarov.

Document No. 29: 1979. Bulgarian Cooperation with KGB against “Subversive Centers”

This document provides further details of joint KGB-Bulgarian measures to counter RFE and RL. It vaunts the effectiveness of Bulgarian regime counterpropaganda, claiming that it thwarted Western efforts to create internal strife in Bulgaria.

[Excerpt]

SECRET!

We have investigated jointly with the Fifth Directorate of the KGB 32 subversive centers and organizations (over 50 operative files with more than 100 objects), using 35 agents.

We established the [identity of] collaborators of Radio Liberty, of the Bulgarian section of Free Europe, and their connections in the People's Republic of Bulgaria and the USSR. We are investigating the 11 most active ones. As a result of our joint activity we created conditions for the control and interception of their channels of communication with certain anti-social elements in our country. We are preparing an operation for the infiltration of one of our agents into Radio Free Europe. We implemented successfully the campaign aimed at the disclosure of the subversive activity of said radio stations and the slandering and provocative activities of their teams, by means of radio and TV broadcasting of more than 80 programs and several documentaries, and also by publishing in the press more than 500 items. Thanks to these measures we managed to foil the attempts of the enemy to provoke acute subversive actions against our countries during the Belgrade summit and other international events. We took similar measures in order to block the anti-Bulgarian propaganda carried out in the West regarding the death of the defectors G. Markov and V. Simeonov.

As a result of our joint efforts we developed and implemented measures against the leaders and emissaries of the NTS, BLF, BOD, the Human Rights League, Amnesty International, the World Zionist Organization, the American Jewish Committee, the Armenian nationalist organization Dashnaktzutyun, the Vienna branch of the Sokhnut agency and the

documentation center, the World Sefarad organization and the Jewish communities in the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia. [...]

Source: Bulgarian Interior Ministry Archive, Fond I, Record 10A, Document 344. Obtained by Jordan Baev. Translated by Miroslav Vajarov.

Document No. 30: 1979. Interior Ministry Note on Actions against Western Radio

A Bulgarian Interior Ministry paper details coordinated actions against Western radio in the aftermath of the May 1977 Budapest meeting of Bloc security services. The paper identifies RFE, and notably several of its broadcasters who recently defected from Bulgaria, as a major threat. It accuses Western media of sensationalizing the murder of Georgi Markov (who was killed by the Zhivkov regime).

[Excerpt]

Top Secret!

Note

Reference: Certain trends in the fight of the Sixth Directorate of State Security against the enemy's ideological sabotage.

The development of the political and operational situation in the world confirmed the findings and conclusions of the congresses of the CPSU, the BCP, and the other fraternal Parties, at the conference of our security agencies in May 1977 in Budapest.

This development sustains its dynamic, multi-plan and complicated character. In spite of the predominant tendency toward political and military relaxation, resulting from the growing strength of the socialist community headed by the USSR, the reactionary powers of the West, united with Maoism, are putting forth efforts to torpedo this process in order to continue the arms race and return to the cold war. The global character of the enemy's ideological sabotage against our countries is increasing.

In the battle against real socialism, the enemy continues to focus a lot of attention on the PRB, recognizing its strategic location in the Balkans as a southern flank of the Warsaw Pact, and the opportunities to use it as a stepping-stone to penetrate USSR territory. During the last two-three years, ideological sabotage against the different social and ethnic groups in the country increased sharply, and took on an even more open anti-Soviet and anti-Bulgarian character. The attempts at reconnaissance and ideological penetration of our country are even more active, aiming

to destabilize the foundations of socialist society and create an atmosphere in which internal opposition would appear, both on a legal and illegal basis. In order to achieve these goals, they actively use existing ideological and propaganda sabotage centers, hostile emigrant nationalist, religious and other organizations, and international academic, cultural, youth, and sports exchanges.

The main sabotage propaganda centers, Free Europe, Deutsche Welle, BBC and Voice of America, the staff of which embody the most active and vicious traitors, by technical and organizational reshuffling and involving newly enlisted traitors to our country, produce a focused program to strengthen their ideological and psychological pressure against the PRB. From a concentrated anti-Soviet and anti-Communist standpoint, they significantly increased their speculations on the so-called problem of “protection of human rights.” Open attacks and slander against socialist reality and the leading role of the BCP have increased. They put forward, as an example to be followed, dissident activities in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, Polish People’s Republic, and the East German Democratic Republic, and praise the Eurocommunist deviation of some Western European Communist Parties, the “independent” line of the League of Yugoslav Communists and the Romanian Communist Party, and the aggressive anti-Soviet course of Maoist China. They are doing their best to create political skepticism, social inertia and dissatisfaction amongst the different strata of the population, with the goal of provoking certain hostile actions and an organized opposition against the Party and the Power of the People. These aspirations force constant spreading of calumnious fabrications about the presence of a dissident movement, about the “political killing” of Georgi Markov, and intentional terror against hostile Bulgarian emigrants, spread by some of the Western nations’ mass information resources.

Radio Free Europe remains the most dangerous subversive center, employing all the leaders of the hostile emigration. The active group of traitor-intellectuals—P. Semerdzhiev, V. Kostov, A. Slavov, Dimiter Inkyov, and, until recently, G. Markov—was formed there.

Source: Bulgarian Subject Collection, Box 12, Hoover Archives. Obtained by A. Ross Johnson. Translated by Sveta Milusheva.

Czechoslovakia

Document No. 31: 1956. Politburo Resolution on Plan to Counter “Reactionary” Exiles

This Czechoslovak Politburo Resolution of 1956 approved an Interior Ministry plan to counter “reactionary exiles.” Radio Free Europe was an important target, and a series of disinformation actions were planned to disrupt its operations.

[Excerpt]

Strictly confidential!

Re: A work plan of the 1st Administrative Division of the Ministry of the Interior to counter the Czechoslovak reactionary exiles.

We are providing this analysis of the current situation and the activities of the Czechoslovak reactionary exiles, along with the most important goals of the 1st Administrative Division of the Ministry of the Interior in the struggle against the exiles, and concrete actions in individual countries.

Enclosure I : Draft resolution

Enclosure III: Action plan

Submitted by : Comrade Barak, September 19, 1956

29 pages

R e s o l u t i o n : [*crossed out and replaced by the following text*: postpone for the next meeting]

141st meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party on October 1 [1956]

Re: Action plan of the 1st Administrative Division of the Ministry of the Interior in the fight against the Czechoslovak reactionary exiles (comrade Barak)

It has been decided that:

The Politburo of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party:

- 1/ Takes into account the action plan of the 1st Administrative Division of the Ministry of the Interior in the fight against the Czechoslovak reactionary exiles, and,
- 2/ Charges Comrade Barak, Minister of the Interior, with the task of submitting at the beginning of the year 1957 a report on the status of this action plan.

Executant: Comrade Barak

cc: Comrades Novotny and Siroky

Enclosure III

The current situation of the Czechoslovak exiles and their most important activities

Most émigré organizations, parties and unions, with the exception of the social democratic party, are managed, financed and controlled by Americans through the "Free Europe Committee," with its headquarters in New York. This Committee is influenced by the US State Department.

Radio Free Europe, at present the most important center of American émigré propaganda against the Czechoslovak socialist republic, is under the control of the Committee for Free Europe.

The most important goals in the fight against émigrés, their propaganda and influence in the Czechoslovak Republic and abroad:

1. Acquiring information from the current agents who act among émigrés. It is necessary to start using them more effectively, particularly in the following areas:

- A/ to provide reports on espionage activities against CSSR.
- B/ to provide reports on plans, activities and the current situation of émigré organizations and leading representatives.
- C/ to provide reports on émigré cooperation with the official representatives of Western countries, Czechoslovak emigrants, and Sudeten Germans, and other émigrés.
- D/ to report on the current and planned propaganda activities of émigrés.

It is essential that the agents should actively publish articles in the daily press to influence prominent persons to return to CSSR and suggest subversive activities. [...]

Subversive activities among émigrés with a special focus on Radio Free Europe:

1. Information acquired from interviews with former emigrants who returned to Czechoslovakia (Radka, Kasal, and others) will be published in our newspapers in the form of concrete and truthful stories attacking individual emigrants and Radio Free Europe. Also used will be information from their colleagues.
2. To create friction between Radio Free Europe and other émigrés and to further deepen these disagreements we will use agent TONDY and his journal.
3. During the planned period we will run subversive actions on a smaller scale among the RFE employees, such as phone calls from Western Germany, because we have RFE's complete phone directory. During each month until the end of the planned period we will perform on average two subversive actions.
4. The following activity is planned for October 28, 1956:

Flyers will be forged with information on a secret meeting of Adenauer's government dealing with the gradual removal of emigrants from Western Germany. At the same time the flyer will call for a demonstration on October 28, 1956, in one of the cities of West Germany.

5. A memorandum, called "The proclamation of the young," aimed against leading RFE American executives, will be distributed asking for withdrawal of old employees who are doing things badly to give a chance to the young who have not compromised themselves yet. The project will be completed by September 30, 1956.
6. A letter on the official RFE letterhead will be written and distributed among West German magazines whose journalists have visited Czechoslovakia in the past and who are now publishing articles that more or less praise life in Czechoslovakia. The letter will attack these journalists, accusing them of disrupting RFE propaganda in the free world and collaborating with the Communist regime. An American measure will be mentioned as a threat. To be fulfilled by October 30, 1956.
7. During the planned period a set of small operations will be carried out with the aim of ridiculing RFE in the eyes of the émigrés and the Western European public. The following is planned:
 - a/ Certain merchandise will be purchased in the name of RFE from a German firm. Problems and disagreement with the firm will ensue at time of delivery. RFE will be billed.
 - b/ Ads will be placed in Radio Free Europe's name in West German magazines, asking persons of German nationality to apply for service jobs with Radio Free Europe and noting that the applicants should show up in person to negotiate conditions of employment. We expect unpleasant situations to occur, stemming from the fact that Germans will be getting RFE jobs at the expense of the exiles.

Subversive and chaos-creating operations:

We will continue carrying out successful operations aimed at creating confusion, i.e. mailing letters to American firms, in which we will disclose criminal delinquencies, embezzlement and profiteering on the part of prominent exiles posing as émigrés.

We will borrow Soviet protocols relating to interrogation of officials regarding embezzlement of the Czechoslovak committee in Salzburg and AFCR employees. [...]

Source: Karel Kasparek private archive. Obtained by A. Ross Johnson. Translated by Blanka Pasternak.

Document No. 32: 1975. Interior Ministry Note on Actions of Agent Minařík against RFE

Pavel Minařík worked at RFE from 1968 to 1976 as an agent of the Czechoslovak Intelligence Service. During these years he provided many documents and analyses to the Service. Many of his intelligence reports from Munich have been published in Prokop Tomek, "Czechoslovak Security Services against Radio Free Europe: 'Target Alpha,'" op.cit. This document contains Interior Minister Obzina's approval of an Intelligence Service plan to recall and publicize Minařík's activities. Minařík was recalled to Prague and surfaced at a staged press conference in 1976.

1st Administrative Division of the Federal Ministry of the Interior – department 31

Prague, September 30, 1975

Strictly confidential!

Approved by the Minister of the Czechoslovak Ministry of the Interior, Jaromir Obzina [with a handwritten note: approved provided Minařík during his activities in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic will become member of the SNB]

Preliminary draft on activities against Radio Free Europe, Émigré Council and some representatives of the Czechoslovak exiles.

4 pages

no enclosures

In September 1968 our agent PLEY [Minařík] was sent to the German Federal Republic to permanently infiltrate RFE headquarters in Munich.

The operation was successful and PLEY has been working at the radio station since November 1968. During his stay at RFE he has familiarized

himself with the RFE agenda, the policies and the atmosphere, established close contacts with almost all 1968 emigrants who work for RFE, including the prominent Czechoslovak exiles at the Czech broadcasting department. Based on his cooperation with the Czechoslovak intelligence service, he turned over to the Ministry many [RFE] documents, including the analyses of the station's work, regulations and directives issued by the US management, photocopies of correspondence from some RFE employees, etc.

During his stay abroad he met prominent Czechoslovak exiles living in Western Europe, such as Pelikan, Tigrid, Filip, Pachman, Muller, Pfaf, Utitz, Rehak, and others. Following our instructions he took an active part in the activities of different exile organizations, including the Advisory Council, and has gained an insight into the life and the activities of the Czechoslovak exiles in the German Federal Republic. He took part in almost every important meeting of the top Czechoslovak exiles. PLEY has become a well known figure both in RFE and in the Czechoslovak exile community in the Federal Republic of Germany and beyond its borders.

Due to the current cuts and layoffs in RFE, our agent PLEY could lose his job which would result in considerable limitation of his intelligence services. In addition to that, PLEY has many times expressed his desire to return to the Czechoslovak Republic, get married and have children.

The current situation seems favorable for putting agent PLEY to use in preparing effective actions aimed at both Radio Free Europe in Munich and counter the activities of the top Czechoslovak exiles.

In connection with the upcoming 15th Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia we can expect increased activity on the part of ideological subversion centers, emigrant organizations and Radio Free Europe. During this period we suggest undertaking measures using our co-worker PLEY to compromise the above mentioned organizations and individual prominent exiles.

Based on our experience and the favorable response to our action called "Talks from the Other Side," we are convinced that using agent PLEY will be very effective, because PLEY is relatively young, intelligent and generally capable. We can safely make use of him in the media, press conferences, etc., contrary to the problematic comrade Hracka.

If the action is safely completed, we plan to bring agent PLEY back to Czechoslovakia at the end of 1975 and present him to the public as an officer of the Czechoslovak intelligence service who worked at Radio

Free Europe to uncover and make public the station's longtime adversary activities against the socialist countries, and unmask the moral profile of individual RFE employees; to show the role of RFE in organizing adversary activities among Czechoslovak exiles as instruments of ideological subversion centers and special services, while at the same time uncovering the relationships among the top Czechoslovak émigrés officials, their conflicts, the tributary relation to their "providers," etc., all that in the light of the conclusions of the Conference on Security and Cooperation (CSCE) in Europe in Helsinki.

[PLEY's] withdrawal and his subsequent public appearance will also become part of the political campaign preceding the Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, although we expect that this action will last for a long time.

We plan an informational meeting with PLEY in the second part of October 1975 in Czechoslovakia. It is absolutely necessary to settle the matter of his possible withdrawal before that time, so that he can be given the directives needed for his final activities.

If this draft is approved, we will present our proposal for withdrawal of agent PLEY, as well as the scope and subject matter of the series of actions.

.....

Head of the 31st Department of the 1st Administrative Division of the Ministry of the Interior, Lieutenant Colonel Jan Pozorny

Recommended by:

Deputy of the Head of the 1st Division of the Ministry of the Interior, Lieutenant Colonel Jaromir Frybort

Head of the 1st Division of the Ministry of the Interior, Major General Milos Hladik

Source: Jiri Setina Collection, Box 15, Hoover Archives. Obtained by A. Ross Johnson. Translated by Blanka Pasternak.

Document No. 33: 1969. Report to CPSU Central Committee
on Visit of Czech Delegation to Discuss Countering Enemy
Propaganda in Czechoslovakia

This document indicates the continuing influence of German-language and other Western media in Czechoslovakia nine months after the Soviet invasion of August 1968. Czechoslovak officials criticized the heavy-handed Soviet broadcasts of Radio Vltava, and viewed other Soviet proposals to counter Western influence as counterproductive.

[Excerpt]

Secret

Copy No. 1

122112

11 April 1969

To be returned to the CPSI CC (General Department)

300 A/3

CPSU CC

The Broadcast and Television Committee of the USSR Council of Ministers submits a report on a visit by the delegation from the Czechoslovak radio to the USSR headed by the acting Chief Director O. Zavodsky.

ATTACHMENT: 5 pages of text, not secret, addressee only.

Chairman of the Committee

[signed]

N. MESYATSEV

9 April 1969

No.303s

303 A/3

22.IV.69, CPSU CC

Note on No. 12211

Material for information purposes only.

Propaganda Directorate of the CPSU CC has been informed.

Secretary of the Propaganda

Directorate of the CPSU CC

[signed]

[Stamped:]

/A. Dmytruk/

Material is for information purposes only.

Propaganda Directorate of the CPSU CC has
been informed.

Head of the Sector

[signed] Guskov

21.4.69

15D/2 5 June 1969

REPORT

On a Visit to the USSR by the Delegation from Czechoslovak Radio
Headed by the Acting Chief Director O. Zavodsky

In accordance with instructions to address questions of cooperation in areas of broadcasting and exchange of radio programs, and in order to further develop the Supplemental Protocol on cooperation in broadcasting in 1969, in response to the Broadcast and Television Committee's invitation, a delegation from the Czechoslovak radio consisting of the acting Chief Director Odon Zavodsky (head of the delegation); Director of Radio Bratislava, Andrei Sarvash; Deputy Chief Director of the Czechoslovak Radio, Rostyslav Begal; Chairman of Party organizations of Czechoslovak Radio, Vladimir Drikazsky; Chairman of Radio Bratislava, Ilius Farkasha; and Deputy Head of International Relations Department of Radio Bratislava, Lidya Riabina, visited the Soviet Union during March 11–15, 1969.

In the course of discussions, the Czechoslovak side stressed that the current political situation in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic (CSSR) has not yet stabilized; an internal struggle is still underway and it is difficult to project how long it will last, and, therefore, certain questions would not be resolved during this conversation. In addition, the Czecho-

slovak side stated that it is necessary to discuss and, if it might be expedient, to review methods and content of cooperation, and specify the plan of action for 1969 so as to appeal to Czechoslovak listeners and enhance the influence of mass media on people in the CSSR with the aim of normalizing the situation in the country in a way consistent with agreements between the regulatory bodies of both countries. [...]

Article 3 of the Protocol, which provides for the exchange of program material concerning the 25th anniversary of the defeat of fascism, was also discussed. The Soviet side suggested that this paragraph should acknowledge active protest by both organizations against revanchism, neo-Nazism, and the politics of imperialism, and also coordinate radio programs exposing the anti-socialist policies of Mao Zedong.

The Czechoslovak side stated that such a detailed formulation of this Article is impossible, for it deals with counter-propaganda that is too complicated under the present conditions in the CSSR. R. Begal, member of the delegation, defended this argument by saying that, supposedly, fighting Western influence, especially that of the FRG and Austria, is very difficult in the CSSR because the country's entire population speaks German and any protest against Western radio stations would attract even more listeners. The only realistic solution, Begal said, is to speed up the stream of information, and make it as operative as possible in order to reduce the influence of Western propaganda on the population of the CSSR. In this respect, R. Begal noted, the radio station Vltava, owing to its outdated broadcasting methods and poor debating style, strengthened the influence of Western, particularly Austrian, propaganda.

Our side pointed out that although the issue of putting together counter-propaganda is an internal affair of the Czechoslovak radio, there are, nevertheless, comprehensive problems in relation to which both radio organizations must act with one accord. It was also emphasized that it is necessary to work in this direction more actively, and rid the airtime of ideological garbage and unscrupulous politics that litter many programs of the Czechoslovak radio.

Andrei Sarvash stated that he agreed with the view of the Committee Chairman, comrade Mesyatsev N.N., on the question of counter-propaganda. He noted that the best kind of propaganda is offensive propaganda that is consistent with the spirit of the latest plenary sessions of the CC CPSU, and said that, under the current conditions in the CSSR, patriotic and internationalist propaganda is of increased importance.

Closing the discussion on Article 3, parties agreed on the following wording: "Soviet and Czechoslovak radio will exchange program material concerning the 25th anniversary of the defeat of fascism. Both sides will actively protest against revanchism, neo-nazism, and politics of imperialism in the world." [...]

The working Protocol provides for the exchange of material dedicated to the centennial of V.I. Lenin's birthday, national holidays of the USSR and CSSR, programs on public policy, politics, literature and drama, music recordings and other content intended for various social and age groups in the CSSR.

Describing members of the delegation, it should be noted that, first of all, the Director of the Bratislava Radio, A. Sarvash, the Chairman of Party organizations of the Prague Radio, V. Prikazsky, and Bratislava Radio [Chairman], Y. Farkash spoke very cordially and sincerely, and repeatedly expressed their satisfaction with the negotiations. V. Prikazsky stated that he would do everything he could to promote understanding of the concerns raised by the Soviet side in the course of the discussions.

Head of the delegation O. Zavodsky was passive during the negotiations. Judging by the delegation's attitude toward him, he does not enjoy great authority with them.

Andrei Sarvash was more active and precise in his political persuasions and demonstrated a good understanding of our motivations.

Deputy Chief Director of the Czechoslovak Radio R. Begal demonstrated diligence in his remarks on the widening of cooperation between our organizations.

The delegation visited Leningrad and went sightseeing in the city, particularly to places associated with Lenin.

The talks were attended by committee members Karev N.N., Kuza-
kov K.S., Vartanova E.E., Editors-in-Chief Zakharov A.N. and Sarkisov
K.A., Deputy Editor-in-Chief (program Mayak [Beacon]), Secretary of
the Party committee of the Soviet radio Yegorychev V.A.

Source: Archives of the Central Committee of the CPSU. Obtained by Michael Nelson. Translated by Volodymyr Valkov.

Hungary

Document No. 34: 1963. Report to Politburo on Jamming of Western Radio

This report prepared for the Hungarian Politburo in 1963 concluded that current jamming efforts were ineffective. It provided two options for the Politburo: to maintain and redirect jamming, focusing it on RFE, or to end it entirely.

Document 34 that follows records the Politburo discussion of the issue by supporters of both alternatives, followed by Kádár's decision to end jamming in January 1964 after consultation with other Communist countries. Noteworthy in these documents is the assessment that the West has outstripped the Soviet bloc in terms of transmitters, and the assumption that ending jamming might be used as a bargaining chip to soften Western broadcasts.

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Report to the Politburo on jamming hostile radio stations

I.

1. The governments of capitalist countries have been developing their radio propaganda that target other, especially socialist countries, to a significant degree. Year after year they invest huge amounts in installing new broadcasting stations and in improving the reception of their programs.

In 1959 the government of the United States used 85 stations with a total capacity of 2,000 kW to broadcast the programs of Voice of America. By 1962, this capacity increased to 99 stations and 9,000 kW. Recent-

ly a new broadcasting station was opened with six 300 kW transmitters each. The construction of another six 250 kW and six 500 kW transmitters and 93 modern antennas is also underway.

According to the Information Agency of the government of the United States the Congress has again approved significant amounts for investment in the technical development of Voice of America. As part of this project the broadcasting stations in Western Europe will be modernized and expanded, including the broadcasting capacity of Radio Free Europe. A new radio station is being built on the island of Rhodes in Greece on which the government has already spent USD 40 million. In addition, the US government has made an effort—with success—to lease the free broadcasting capacity of other countries.

Though smaller in scope and size, the investment and development efforts of England, Western Germany and other capitalist countries in pursuit of the same goal should not be underestimated either. For instance, the English government has allocated GBP 4.5 million to improve the reception of the foreign language programs of the BBC.

2. At present there are 11 capitalist countries broadcasting programs to Hungary on 143 wavelengths altogether for 51 hours per day. Radio Free Europe broadcasts propaganda programs in Hungarian on 40 wavelengths. (See Supplement 1 [not translated]).

The largest number of wavelengths and the longest program times are used by the Voice of America and London. Radio Free Europe broadcasts programs in Hungarian on several wavelengths concurrently from early morning till midnight.

3. The foreign language programs of the People's Republic of Hungary have not been improved since 1950—due to the lack of new stations. The Hungarian Radio and Television currently broadcasts programs in 9 foreign languages [*handwritten footnote*: app. 22 hours per day] through two 100 kW and one 135 kW medium wave stations. (See Supplement 2 [not translated].)

II.

1. The jamming of propaganda programs targeting our country from capitalist countries was organized by the Minister of Postal Services in 1952. At the same time a radio-protection agreement was made between the

Hungarian, the Soviet and the Romanian Postal Services. (Today Romania is no longer part of this cooperation.)

The tasks related to the protection of Hungary from foreign radio programs is performed by the Central Telecommunications Office, while the stations are developed, run and maintained by the Technical Department of Hungarian Radio and Television. Both organizations are supervised by the Ministry of Transportation and Postal Services.

The Central Telecommunications Office carries out its function of protecting the country from hostile foreign radio programs by running so-called local jamming centers and with assistance from our allied countries. Thus it performs a dual task:

- a. It oversees the work of the local jamming centers. These stations are installed in Budapest and Pécs. There are 22 stations at its disposal now, most of which have a capacity of 1 kW or smaller. Only one of them has a capacity of 15 kW, and the total capacity is 35 kW. The average monthly running time is 3,000 program hours.
- b. It organizes and coordinates protection work with our allied countries. In this framework we receive assistance from the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia amounting to 4,050 and 480 transmission hours respectively. On our part we transmit 4,330 hours to the Soviet Union and 714 hours to Czechoslovakia.

There are eight 15 kW stations and part of the capacity of one 100 kW station at our disposal to provide assistance to our allied countries. These stations are installed in Székesfehérvár, Diósd, and Szolnok.

Except for the 100 kW station these transmitters are not capable of broadcasting radio programs and are thus used exclusively for jamming.

The technical condition of these stations, due to their strain and overuse, is not satisfactory, and some of them do not even meet essential safety requirements.

Protection is funded by the central budget, which costs HUF 40 million per year.

As part of the cooperation with our allied countries, the costs of transmitting are mutually invoiced by Hungary and the Soviet Union on the basis of an accepted tariff. There is no significant difference between the number of transmission hours broadcast by each Party. Still, there is a difference in the settlement of the accounts to the benefit of the Soviet Union that amounts to HUF 20 million per year [*handwritten footnote*:

included in the above mentioned HUF 40 million] because the Soviets use stations with a bigger transmission capacity. At the moment our co-operation with Czechoslovakia does not include financial settlement of accounts.

2. The efficiency of jamming in the whole country is as follows: 30% between 0500–0900, 80% between 0900–1500, and 10% from 1500–0100. [*Handwritten insertion*: The efficiency of jamming changes from region to region. It is most efficient in Budapest and Pécs. It is quite efficient in the center of Budapest, but much less so in the outer districts.] The above percentage figures show that our protection work is not satisfactory at the moment. The foreign propaganda programs can be received in the whole country in the early morning and in the evening, when most people are at home, and even during the day people can easily find a wavelength that is not jammed. So listeners who know the program times and the wavelengths of these broadcasts can find a wavelength they can tune in at practically any time during the day.

Reasons for unsatisfactory performance:

- Unlike our allied countries, we have not developed our local jamming stations to the required extent. The existing transmitting stations are out-of-date and lack the required capacity. The antennas are also rather outdated.
- The assistance received from our allied states is restricted to certain periods of the day, especially during daytime.
- Lack of political direction. The programs are not jammed with a view to their political content. Thus, the programs of Radio Free Europe are jammed the least.
- As a result of significant investment and development, the propaganda programs of capitalist countries are broadcast by increasingly more powerful stations concurrently on several wavelengths.

III.

Based on the above assessment of the situation it is time we revised the current practice of jamming foreign propaganda programs. Revision is justified by the following:

- As a result of the right policy confidence in the Party and the government has grown significantly, and the political atmosphere in the country is positive.
- The tone of state-owned capitalist radio programs has changed recently; they are no longer as sharp as they used to be.
- To our knowledge the Soviet Union has terminated the jamming of American and English state-owned radio stations.
- Due to the way in which radio waves are transmitted on the one hand, and to the significant development of radio stations by capitalist countries on the other, one hundred percent jamming is impossible, or else it would require investments that far exceed our present capabilities. (Based on the current situation, 80% efficiency of jamming in the morning and evening hours would require an investment of HUF 5–600 million.)

In our view the present international and domestic political situation makes it possible to terminate, partially or entirely, the jamming of foreign propaganda programs.

In the case of partial termination, the jamming of state-owned stations could be terminated. The existing jamming stations and the assistance received from our allies could then be devoted to a more effective jamming of the programs of Radio Free Europe and Patrol. [*Handwritten insertion*: In this way we could enhance the efficiency of jamming but it still would not result in any substantial improvement.]

Even in the case of full termination of jamming, we believe the jamming capacity should be maintained and put on reserve.

Since the Central Telecommunications Office is an administrative and executive body, political control and supervision should be made much more efficient and organized, for the Ministry of Transportation and Postal Services is neither competent nor capable of attending to this task. [*Handwritten insertion*: Therefore state supervision concerning the jamming of foreign radio stations should be taken over by the Ministry of the Interior.]

In the interest of popularizing the results of our socialist development and cultural life it seems desirable to develop our foreign language radio programs and install stations with a much larger capacity, in accordance with our financial resources.

IV.

Draft resolution

1. Alternative II (proposed by the Administrative Department of the Central Committee)

The present international and domestic situation makes it possible to partially terminate the jamming of foreign propaganda radio programs.

Therefore the Politburo orders the Minister of Transportation and Postal Services to terminate the jamming of state-owned stations broadcasting in Hungarian from capitalist countries. At the same time the Politburo orders the Minister to see to a more efficient jamming of the propaganda programs of Radio Free Europe and Patrol. The minister should conduct negotiations with our allied countries providing assistance in this matter concerning the exact transmission times and wavelengths of the jamming transmissions—as specified in the resolution—and include all the details in an inter-State agreement.

2. Alternative I (proposed by the Department of Industry and the Department of Propaganda of the Central Committee)

The present international and domestic situation makes it possible to fully terminate the jamming of foreign propaganda radio programs.

Therefore the Politburo orders the Minister of Transportation and Postal Services to terminate the jamming of stations broadcasting in Hungarian from capitalist countries. The minister should conduct negotiations with our allied countries providing assistance in this matter concerning the modification of cooperation in this matter—as specified in the resolution—and include all the details in an inter-State agreement.

3. The Minister of Transportation and Postal Services should ensure that the local jamming centers are put on reserve and maintained properly so that the technical facilities remain in running condition.

4. The task of supervising jamming activities should be transferred to the Ministry of the Interior as of January 1, 1964. The Ministry of the Interior should issue orders to start jamming a certain station, if the need arises, or to terminate jamming, as well as to make a decision as to what programs should be jammed and at what times.

[Illegible handwritten insertion]

5. After negotiating with the president of Hungarian Radio and Television, the Minister of Transportation and Postal Services should work out a proposal for the government to improve the technical background of our foreign language radio programs so that the results of our socialist development and cultural life can be popularized more effectively, especially in capitalist countries. [*Handwritten insertion*: The proposal should be submitted to the government by June 30, 1964.]

[*Handwritten insertion*: The Minister of Transportation and Postal Services and the Minister of the Interior should be made responsible for the execution of the above resolution.]

Received by: comrade Lajos Fehér
 comrade János Pap
 comrade István Kossa
 comrade László Orbán
 comrade Sándor Rác
 comrade István Szurdi

Budapest, October 1, 1963.

Source: Magyar Országos Levéltár (MOL) M-KS-288.f. 5/316.ő.e. Obtained by Csaba Békés. Translated by András Bocz.

Document No. 35: 1963. Minutes of Politburo Meeting on Jamming of Western Radio

See preceding document.

[Excerpt]

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL!

Made in 3 copies.

MINUTES

Of the meeting of the Politburo on October 8, 1963

ATTENDED BY: comrades Antal Apró, Béla Biszku, Lajos Fehér, Jenő Fock, Sándor Gáspár, János Kádár, Gyula Kállai, Zoltán Komócsin, Ferenc Münich, Sándor Rónai, István Szirmai, and furthermore: comrades Miklós Ajtai, János Brutyó, Lajos Cseterki, Pál Ilku, Rezső Nyers, and comrades Károly Németh and Árpád Pullai.

4. Report on the situation concerning radio protection

Comrade István Kossa:

The Ministry of Transportation and Postal Services endorses the first variant and proposes that the Politburo should adopt this position. We do not see any sense in supporting the second variant. Even if the jamming capacity were to be concentrated in certain areas or at certain times, we could only jam fractions of the programs broadcast by Radio Free Europe and Patrol. We need to get the equipment ready, and if the Ministry of the Interior deems it necessary, we can start jamming the station periodically. By the way, even if we jam the station, most of the jamming will be concentrated on the Budapest and Pécs regions. So even if jamming were maintained, the hostile radio programs would be heard freely almost in the whole of Hungary.

Comrade János Kádár:

Does anybody have any information as to how this thing is handled in our allied countries? What is the real difference between the first and the second variant from a technical and financial aspect?

Comrade István Szurdi:

Some comrades in this office had a chance to monitor for a few days how jamming was done in some allied countries. The results of monitoring are as follows: the broadcasts of state-owned radio stations are not jammed in the Soviet Union, but the programs of private stations, including Radio Free Europe [Radio Liberty is meant], are jammed. In Czechoslovakia every Western station is jammed, even hostile programs targeting Poland in cities near the Polish border. Bulgaria also jams every Western station, so does the GDR, though they mostly jam broadcasts from West Berlin. In Poland only certain hostile programs in the Polish language are jammed. No broadcasts are jammed in the People's Republic of Romania.

Comrade Gyula Kállai:

At the moment I believe the second variant is to be favored. As for the arguments that are brought up by the comrades to support the first variant—our system is stable, the political atmosphere is good in the country—I agree, but I think we should not underestimate the effects of these hostile radio programs. The international political situation is rather unstable, and we need to bear in mind that they could cause some trouble. The Soviet Union, where the system is more stable politically and the people can resist more firmly than in Hungary, stopped the jamming of state-owned stations only.

Whichever variant is adopted by the Politburo, I propose the following two things to consider before one of the two variants is implemented: 1) We should consult with our allied countries on this issue. What we are going to decide on is a very important political issue and it emerges as such in every country, as an extremely important political issue. The consultation I am proposing would be important also from the point of view of following a uniform procedure. 2) If the jamming of state-owned radio stations is going to be stopped, we should perhaps start negotiations with the BBC and the USA; that is, we should not stop jamming their stations

without a “price.” We should tell them that we will stop jamming their stations, and in return they should give up broadcasting hostile programs to Hungary. I think this is a feasible proposition.

Comrade István Szirmai:

I propose that the Politburo should adopt the first variant and make a resolution of it. My arguments supporting this variant are as follows. It has been established that the efficiency of jamming in the periods most frequently listened to by people is 10%, even with maximal efforts using all the apparatus at our disposal in our country, including foreign assistance. So anybody who wants to listen to these Western stations can do so even on a small radio. The whole thing has only political significance, and the Politburo should consider whether this political impact is positive or negative. In my view it is negative, so there is no point in jamming with an efficiency of 10% as far as our political power is concerned.

The fact that the Soviet Union also jams stations is a different matter, for their efficiency is not 10% but much higher. However even if sophisticated technology were to be installed in Hungary, we would not be able to jam these stations entirely. The territory of Hungary is small; this is why we made an agreement with the Czechs, the Poles and the Romanians that they would jam the broadcasts from an appropriate distance.

In case we decide to adopt the second variant—and here I am answering comrade Kádár’s question—it would not involve any budgetary deficit or require special austerity [measures]. It would simply mean that the available equipment would be used to jam only certain predetermined broadcasts. Currently, 143 wavelengths are used for such broadcasts but the equipment available is capable of jamming only 22. That means we could jam only 22 of the 143 wavelengths.

We have eight jamming stations with a 15 kW capacity and one with 100 kW. These are not used to jam broadcasts targeting Hungary but rather Russian language programs targeting the Soviet Union on the basis of mutual agreement. These stations must be maintained in the future too. However, if possible, it would be a good idea to free this medium wave station and use it for broadcasting our own programs. In this context I would like to call the attention of the Politburo to the fact that—as has been amply demonstrated in the introduction to the report by the comrades—enormous technical development is taking place in Western countries, while Hungarian radio technology is lagging behind so that the capacity of the avail-

able radio stations is saturated. We have two 100kW broadcasting stations transmitting propaganda programs in 9 languages by Hungarian Radio. So I want to urge you to devote more attention to development.

One more thing that I want to add. I believe that if the Politburo, and as a result, the government, adopts the first variant, we should call the attention of the editors and owners of hostile radio stations to this fact. Perhaps we should not enter into negotiations with them, but we should let them know when jamming will be stopped and make it clear to them that in return we expect them to strike a more objective tone in their programs. By the way, the Poles are in the same situation, and the broadcasts targeting them are much more objective now.

There is another proposal on the table that the jamming apparatus should be transferred to the Ministry of the Interior. I believe this is not a political issue, and it should belong to the Ministry of the Interior. It would be important to involve the leaders of the radio and the television in this work.

Comrade Béla Biszku:

This proposal was submitted to the Politburo in 1957. The situation was different at that time. Then the apparatus was overseen by the Ministry of the Interior.

I suggest that we should conduct consultations before we make a decision. We have to inform the relevant friendly states that such a problem has arisen in our country and that we would like to consult with them on this issue. We should not underestimate this problem even if efficiency is only 10%. Whenever the situation gets more difficult, the enemy broadcasts immediately jump on rumors and that costs the country more than the HUF 40 million mentioned in the report. I propose that we should adopt the second variant.

Comrade Miklós Ajtai:

There are at least two reasons why we need to consult with them: on the one hand we should ask them their opinion of the situation, and on the other we should ask them what to do with the 100kW station if we stop using it for jamming, since it practically works for them at the moment.

Another question concerns Section 4 on page 8. What is set forth here is that we should work out a proposal by the middle of next year to develop the technical background for foreign language programs together with the

leaders of the Hungarian Radio and Television and the Ministry of Transportation and Postal Services. I do not think the Politburo should accept this proposal in its present form. The preparation of a complex development plan for Hungarian Radio and Television is underway, and this includes the development of domestic and foreign-language programs. The issue should be dealt with in this framework rather than separately. The final decision can only be made when the Third Five-Year Plan is approved, for extra investment is not feasible in the remaining two years of the current Plan.

Comrade Rezső Nyers:

I endorse the first variant. The adoption of the second variant would mean that the current situation would be maintained, and this is inconsistent. At the moment we are capable of jamming the stations in the central areas of Budapest, but even in such areas there are broadcasts that can be easily tuned to and freely listened to by anybody.

I agree with negotiating our plan with the socialist countries, though we have not conducted any such negotiations before. The Soviet Union did not discuss the issue with us when it decided to partially stop jamming. Neither did Romania, they simply wrote a letter.

The way the second variant is described is rather inaccurate, for the efficiency of jamming can not be enhanced without investment. The adoption of the second variant only makes sense if we make a decision on some investment. If we fail to do so, we can still say that any capacity that can be freed up should be used to strengthen existing capacity, but that will not make jamming any more efficient.

Comrade János Kádár:

All this time I have been thinking how ignorant the Politburo is of some very important issues. The things contained in the report are an integral part of our propaganda campaign. When I read the report I was amazed to see what is going on in this respect. And I am sorry to have to say this, comrade Szurdi, but instead of tapping phone lines to get the required information, negotiations should have been conducted with our allied countries.

I cannot comment on this issue because the actual situation is very different from what we all believed to be the case. This issue was raised first in 1957, and then we were told that we should jam these stations. We voted for it because that was what was proposed to us, though it cost

a lot of money. Now it turns out that in reality we are not jamming their stations. The present situation is—and this is the political significance of this issue—that listening to foreign radio stations is not forbidden by law in Hungary. However, the common view is that these broadcasts had better be listened to in secret.

What we need to decide on now is whether we are going to maintain the current situation or not. The comrades are telling us that it essentially involves only Budapest and Pécs; that is, we can only jam the stations in these regions. Making jamming more effective in the Budapest region would really be a substantial development, for it is a long-lasting lesson from the past that, if we have a hold over Budapest, we can control the whole country. Budapest is the center, and everything starts from here.

There is another thing that I do not understand. I wonder why the results of surveys of the efficiency of jamming show that the least effective period is from 3 PM to midnight, right when the most people listen to these programs.

Comrade István Szirmai:

That is because external assistance is stopped during this period, for they are all engaged in doing their own jamming.

Comrade János Kádár:

Comrade Szirmai mentioned how intensive a development was carried out in the West. This should caution us, for if it is worth for them to spend so much on it, it would also be worth for us being able to jam their broadcasts. So the issue is that either we jam the stations, and allocate the required money to it, or we do not continue jamming. Common sense tells me we should not.

There is another issue here concerning Hungarian radio programs targeting foreign countries. However, this is not the same issue. Of course, these programs should be improved and developed, it is a good thing. But it is a totally different issue. Let us separate the two issues. In principle we should endorse the expansions of these broadcasts, for our fraternal parties also say that they are useful for them. However, we cannot make a decision on this issue now.

Consultation should be given priority in the resolutions. The Poles stopped jamming at the end of 1957 but they asked us to continue jam-

ming. We should consult with every country with which we collaborate: the Soviet Union, the Poles, the Czechs and the Romanians. We have to tell them honestly: the Politburo discussed a report on jamming and concluded that hostile stations could only be jammed—even with external assistance—with an efficiency of 10% in the most frequented periods. It incurs enormous costs and it seems that there is no point in continuing with the jamming. Therefore, as of January 1, 1964, jamming will be terminated and we will no longer need the assistance that they provided for us. At the same time we are ready to provide assistance for them in the same framework in the future.

The issue of political supervision has also been raised. If the resolution of the Politburo endorses the above, then it is only of secondary importance. The apparatus, the technical equipment should stay where it is now, and political supervision should be provided by the press subdivision of the Party center.

Shall we stop jamming for free or for money, shall we set a low or a high price for it? What would be a sensible thing to do? We should talk with the English and the USA, or rather we should send them a statement in which we say we have decided to terminate jamming temporarily, and if you are willing to broadcast programs with at least some signs of objectivity, we will not resume it either. If you fail to do so, we will resume it.

The consultations should be conducted within six weeks and the results should be brought to the Politburo for further discussion. The Politburo should then confirm its position and the statement should follow. The consultation should be conducted with the fraternal parties by comrade Szirmai by phone or in writing.

Dated as above:

Record made by:
(Margit Fehér)

Source: Magyar Országos Levéltár (MOL) M-KS-288.f. 5/316.ő.e. Obtained by Csaba Békés. Translated by András Bocz.

Poland

Document No. 36: 1953. Polish Proposal for Bloc-wide Coordination of Jamming

This unsourced document prepared in March 1953 in only three copies, one of which went to Politburo member Jakob Berman, suggested the need for multilateral Soviet bloc coordination of jamming efforts.

March 31, 1953

Top Secret

[originating office not given]

Official Note

1. In December 1951 (when preparations for defense against hostile radio propaganda began) the enemy broadcast in Polish 45 ½ hours daily, using up to 12 frequencies.

By March 1953, however, the total time of all hostile broadcasting had increased to 176 hours daily (an increase of 272% from December 1951), using 32 frequencies (an increase of 166%); in some cases the power of the hostile transmitters increased by 200% and more.

In response, our technical defense measures [i.e., jamming] increased significantly from December 1951 through March 1953. In December 1951, on shortwave, we had nine [jamming] transmitters with a total power of 62 kilowatts available for 7h45m daily; currently there are 29

transmitters (an increase of 223%) with a power of 355 kilowatts (an increase of 472%) available for 428 hours daily (a 55-times increase); in addition, there are now three working local stations equipped with 37 transmitters with a total power of 25 kilowatts.

Also, by the end of 1953, we will have added another 11 transmitters of about 10 kilowatts each, and seven local stations. Sixty special antennas have already been built for higher-power transmitters to protect Poland and friendly states.

Technical protection for medium and long wave has also significantly increased.

In spite of enormous and decisive assistance from the Soviet Union, especially for shortwave, and the build-up of our own measures, our present defenses should be considered insufficient.

On average, we are able to block just over 30% of all hostile broadcasts. It has been especially difficult with shortwave because the physical properties of these frequencies make it difficult to intercept them from Polish territory (during the night, almost impossible).

Fragmentary cooperation with Hungary and Czechoslovakia has only marginally improved the situation.

Effective defense against shortwave broadcasts should be based on coordinated operational management of [jamming] transmitters outside the secured region [i.e., outside Poland]. Current coordination, despite some positive elements, is fragmentary, insufficiently planned, and unable to concentrate its efforts on sectors that are quickly and powerfully attacked. (The enemy for several months has employed the tactic of concentrating its [transmitter] resources on specific countries at different times.) Lack of planned and systematic coordination means insufficient utilization of existing measures here, and most probably not only here.

Conclusions:

The technical defensive measures in our countries can be far more effective for each country if we create a permanent system for operational coordination of our efforts.

Thus we propose calling a meeting of representatives of the appropriate services from the countries concerned in Warsaw to:

- a. Set up a permanent, efficient system of coordinating all existing technical [jamming] measures.
- b. Coordinate the development of technical measures in each country with the aim of increasing cooperation.
- c. Establish the principles of mutual assistance in developing such defensive measures.

Typed in three copies

Copy One to Comrade Berman

Copies Two and Three [addressees not specified]

Source: Institute for National Remembrance (IPN). Obtained by Lechosław Gawlikowski. Translated by Irena Czernichowska.

Document No. 37: 1953. Interior Ministry Report on Intercepted Letters Sent to RFE Cover Addresses

This document is an early reflection of concern with RFE's impact in Poland. Particular attention is given to the broadcasts of Józef Światło, the senior Interior Ministry official who defected in December 1953.

[Excerpt]

[Interior Ministry Department IX]

Warsaw, March 2, 1955

Information Bulletin no. 4/1955

Reference: Letters Addressed to RFE Cover Addresses

Top Secret

In the period between January 1 and March 1, 1955, Department IX confiscated 391 letters sent from various places in Poland to 35 cover addresses in England, France, Sweden, West Germany, Belgium, Holland, Denmark, and Switzerland.

Among the total number of letters were:

- anonymous with hostile content – 230
- hostile content with a sender – 7
- containing various requests regarding searches [for persons], passing on greetings, and establishing contacts – 154

Among the anonymous letters were 11 messages about the provocateur Światło, based on listening to RFE broadcasts or [reading] brochures distributed by balloon.

A writer from Łódź, saying he is a railroad worker: “[VOA] recently broadcast the revelations of Józef Światło. They should broadcast the entire series of programs, as RFE has done. What a sensation Światło is for Poles. We are greatly indebted to [him] for the revelations, which are historic, and which are on everyone’s lips. He has openly taught our rulers a good lesson, showing their true faces to Polish society...”

[More excerpts from letters about Światło follow.]

Many of the anonymous letters with a markedly hostile content, some 17%, were written by young people. Many of them seek contact and instructions for opposing the existing system in Poland, or for assistance in leaving Poland. [...]

Other letters are about the programs of Radio Free Europe. They demonstrate the weakness of the ideological struggle and the need for heightened efforts in that direction. [...]

All letters have been transferred to Department III and Section III of the Security Service in order to identify and take action against the senders.

For the Director of Department IX of the Security Service
Lt. Col. M Taboryski

Source: IPN. Obtained by Lechosław Gawlikowski. Translated by A. Ross Johnson.

Document No. 38: 1972. Gierek Calls For Offensive Action against “Centers of Subversion”

These two Interior Ministry documents indicate Edward Gierek's concern with uncensored information (“rumors” and “gossip”) challenging his policies, and his focus on RFE as a key instrument of “Western subversion.”

[excerpts]

Warsaw, February 18, 1972

Secret

[Ministry of Internal Affairs]

Official Note

On November 16, 1972, at a joint meeting of the PUWP [Polish United Workers' Party] Central Committee Politburo and the Government Presidium, the Ministry of Internal Affairs introduced for approval a statement on the “state of order in the country, with special attention to industrial plant security and social discipline.”

During the discussion the Politburo and the Government Presidium evaluated the work of the Internal Affairs department as good and recommended the following:

1. Uncovering and eliminating leaks about economic, personnel, and political problems and taking vigorous action to stop the resulting rumors (so-called “whispering propaganda”) that are becoming a tool in the political propaganda against the state and Party leadership.
2. Taking more aggressive and effective action against external centers of subversion, especially RFE, by
 - a. Intensifying intelligence operations to identify personnel, plans, and intentions, links with the country, and so forth
 - b. Preventing and eliminating the influence of these centers on social groups and circles

3. Systematically keeping surveillance on the activities of the Roman Catholic clergy and opposition groups. Undertaking vigorous actions to limit the enemy's influence, especially uncovering individuals who inspire such activities.
4. Using the special capabilities of the Internal Affairs department to conduct public opinion research, especially on reactions to decisions by the Party and state leadership.

Session of the Leadership [of Ministry of Internal Affairs]

November 17, 1972

Absent, Comrade Ślabczyk (at a health resort)

Invited, Comrade Morawski

Minister's report on the Politburo meeting on November 16, 1972.

In general, there were no questions from Politburo members about the information presented, except from Comrade Jabłoński, who asked that the most threatened areas be pointed out. [...]

Comrade Gierek [concluded]: This material [from the Ministry of Internal Affairs] shows that the situation continues to be poor. Although crime rates have fallen, things still look very bad. This information is of limited utility. It presents facts but does not reveal their origin, and does not suggest any conclusions. One must identify the gossipers, firmly condemn and punish them, remove them from their positions. One can't just talk about rumors, one must decisively combat them. [...]

More offensive and effective actions should be taken against the centers of subversion, especially RFE, and all other opposition.

Offensive actions are necessary to make people understand that when we give them something it's not because we are weak or feel threatened.

Giving something to society requires increased social discipline.

[...]

[Responsible for] dealing with specific problems:

- combating RFE (Comrade Milewski)
- operational work (Comrade Piętek)
- doing away with sponging (Comrade Stachura)
- fighting rumors by uncovering gossipers (Comrade Piętek)

The Minister [of Internal Affairs] will handle information to be presented at the Ministers' Council Meeting. We need to review certain topics quarterly; criminal matters should be dealt with first.

Source: Polish State Archives. Located by Paweł Machcewicz. Translated by Irena Czernichowska.

Document No. 39: 1983. RFE Linked to CIA at Trial in
Absentia of Zdzisław Najder

RFE Polish Service Director Zdzisław Najder was, like Col. Ryszard Kuklinski and Polish ambassadors who defected after the imposition of martial law, sentenced to death in absentia for treason. This document is an “expert opinion” to the effect that Najder required CIA support to become Polish Service Director. In the subsequent document, the military prosecutor cites such “evidence” in passing the death sentence.

[Excerpt]

REASERCH INSTITUTE ON CONTEMPORARY
PROBLEMS OF CAPITALISM

[...]

Warsaw, 11 IV 1983

Deputy Public Prosecutor Lt. Col. W. Makowski
Main Military Prosecutor's Office
Ul. Nowowiejska 26b
W a r s a w

We are enclosing the opinion of Małgorzaty Mehnel-Szyc on the subject of Radio Free Europe and The Literary Institute Publishers in Paris, prepared in accordance with the brief of January 5, 1983, V Pn. Śl. II-13/82 issued in the case against Zdzisław Najder.

DIRECTOR
Do, dr. hab Andrzej Lawrowski
Signatory

1. Opinion
 2. Invoice IBWPK
- [...]

Question 2. Pertaining to RFE and its representatives from the special services of the countries of NATO, with regard to the role of Zdzisław Najder, the present director of the Polish RFE section.

Based on the available source material, it is not possible to establish with certitude the details of the ties of Radio Free Europe with the special services of the NATO countries. Generally one can affirm that such ties must exist. RFE is an American station, directed, financed, and controlled by a government agency of the United States, and it operates on FRG territory and thus is directly subordinated to a country belonging to NATO.

The Board for International Broadcasting (BIB) has competence over all personnel decisions affecting managerial positions in the stations, including the language section chiefs. All employees of RFE/RL are subject to verification on security grounds by the American special service. In the case of Z. Najder, the decision to appoint him to the position of head of the Polish Service had to be taken at least at the level of the BIB, assuming a positive recommendation from the CIA on the security issue. Indirectly Z. Najder himself admits this, saying that “he waited for a long time for the formalities [to be completed]” before assuming the position. (See “Interview with Z. Najder,” *Tydzień Polski*, October 9, 1982, 4)

Source: Obrad Ochrony Panstwa Collection, Box 2, “Akt sprawy Najdera,” Hoover Archives. Obtained and translated by A. Ross Johnson.

Document No. 40: 1983. Military Court Passes Death
Sentence on Zdzisław Najder

[Excerpt]

Court of the Warsaw Military District

Warsaw, May 28, 1983

Sentence

In the name of the Polish People's Republic

The court of the Warsaw Military District [...]

Sentences

The accused citizen Zdzisław Najder of France ... to death ... and also cancellation of all citizen rights in perpetuity and confiscation of all personal property...

JUSTIFICATION

[...]

Radio Free Europe announced on April 29, 1982, that the accused Zdzisław Najder was appointed the new director of the Polish section of that radio.

[...]

Taking into account the generally known fact that Radio Free Europe is an organization subordinated to the special services of the United States (the CIA oversees and controls it in detail) and that all previous directors of the RFE Polish section have been career officers of the American intelligence service, an investigation of Zdzisław Najder was initiated. [...] The information collected led to the indisputable conclusion that Zdzisław Najder cooperated with the intelligence service of the USA and that the information he provided was highly regarded by his superiors,

who expressed their appreciation not only with American dollars but with naming him as director of the RFE Polish section...

Although the accused Zdzisław Najder attempts in interviews to persuade RFE listeners of his “modesty,” that he was not ready to assume the position, the [Radio] program following his appointment is exceedingly aggressive not only with respect to propaganda. This is evidence of his extremely detailed training for the position as part of his cooperation with the American intelligence service which for a long period utilized Najder in Poland to the detriment of Polish state interests.

*Source: Henryk Piecuch, "Requiem dla Generała" (Warszawa, 2001).
Obtained and translated by A. Ross Johnson.*

Document No. 41: 1984. Central Committee Analysis of Western Propaganda and Recommended Countermeasures

This Central Committee Information Department document contains an analysis of “Western propaganda” during martial law. While claiming that Polish society is “stabilizing,” the Department recommends increased research, analysis, and coordinated publications to counter Western ideological “subversion.”

[Excerpt]

CC Secretariat Conference Sent to Secretary

9. III. 1984 L.dz. KS/556/84

The battle against the influence of ideological and propaganda subversion on Polish society (counterpropaganda)

We submit to the Secretariat the following material that provides a brief look at our activities in the area of counterpropaganda, along with a depiction of ongoing changes in the opponent’s line of attack that have resulted from the ongoing process of stabilization in Poland. We present conclusions aimed at improving our activities against the subversive ideological and propaganda influences on Polish society, and at better coordinating and systematizing them.

1. Review of activity to date in the area of counterpropaganda [...]
2. The main instruments, directions, and methods of the opponent in the area of subversive ideology and propaganda.

The most important instrument of enemy propaganda against Polish society is the radio stations that broadcast [a total of] 37 hours of subversive Polish-language programming daily. They are concentrated in the morning and evening hours. Information, commentary and instructions recognized as important for subversive purposes recur in all the Polish-speaking broadcasts. This indicates a high degree of coordination among [the stations]. In May 1983, 24 percent of OBOP respondents acknowledged listening to foreign radio broadcasts, including regular, sporadic and in-

frequent listeners. This means that the information and argumentation broadcast, at least in part, circulates widely among the public. (Details in Appendix No. 1 [not translated].

The main motivation for listening to foreign radio stations (more than 30%) is the quest for alternative information, in order to compare information learned from different sources. Nearly 50% listen out of curiosity, but less than 20% affirm that they listen to Western radio stations because "they give truthful information." This lowers the credibility of the Western radio stations. One-quarter of the listeners question the accuracy of the information given by the broadcasts, and only one-fifth believe [in the broadcasts' accuracy] without reservations. Evaluations of the strong points of the information broadcast by Western radios stress their speed and their ability to supplement domestic information with interesting facts.

All Western radio stations (especially RFE) try to strengthen their credibility by asserting that the most important thing for them is the Polish national interest. They utilize illegal [underground] domestic publications and pamphlets, even though these play a declining role in shaping public opinion. Their utilization in radio programs serves to camouflage the un-Polish inspiration of the propaganda of NATO countries.

An important role in shaping hostile tendencies among the intelligentsia is played by publications sent from the West through various channels of communication. During eight months of 1983, 470,000 books and 5.2 million copies of printed materials and tapes were sent into Poland through one Warsaw post office alone. For example, 160,000 copies of the Western German publication *PROFIL* were sent. There were grounds for questioning only some 5000 books, pamphlets, and tapes as anti-Communist or anti-state. The majority of these publications had an ostensibly neutral stance but in fact consisted of cunning formulas of bourgeois propaganda linked to the main themes of ideological subversion. These publications are directed mostly at intellectuals, especially in higher educational institutions and renowned libraries. This problem requires a separate detailed analysis.

The actions of subversive enemy propaganda are subordinated to two propaganda goals developed in the 1970s in the USA and implemented consequently with great discipline by all organs of ideological subversion:

- First: defending bourgeois criteria of human rights and democratic principles. The point of departure for the manipulative propaganda activity is propagating the stereotype of “the special connection of Western culture with democracy” and the “mutual contradiction between socialism and democracy.”
- Second: propagating the thesis of the Soviet military threat [and] suggesting that the military superiority of the USSR is the source of aggressive Communist ideology. The necessity of opposing that danger justifies the arms race.

These principles are the basis of contemporary American anti-Communist doctrine (project “Democracy” “Truth” etc.)

Subversive propaganda directed at Poland is subordinated to these principles. However, it is geared to Polish specificity, and the susceptibility of different social groups to bourgeois ideology as a consequence of social consciousness in the 1980s. [Western] propaganda emphasizes as a point of departure the special ties of Poland and Poles with Western culture, and the resistance of the Polish nation to Communist ideology. The intention of the authors of the concept is to create spiritual ties between the broadcasts and their audience in Poland. [...]

In recent days several RFE broadcasts of a thematic character, especially the series “Between the Poland of our dreams and a Poland within our capabilities,” indicate an important change in the direction of subversive propaganda and tactical instructions for the anti-socialist opposition in Poland. The change requires detailed study on our part, because it is possible that that [this approach] will in time come to dominate the propaganda and actions of the enemy. [...]

5. Conclusions

In order to perfect our counterpropaganda, more systematization is needed, i.e., we should aim to improve and coordinate this activity while simultaneously shoring up its professional foundation. In this regard the Information Department proposes:

a) appointing a CC press staff to coordinate a counterpropaganda group comprised of the deputy heads of the [CC] Information, Press, Radio, and Television, and Ideology departments who are responsible for handling these issues with the mass media and intra-Party activities. A

performance assessment should be provided at a staff session at least quarterly;

b) within two weeks the Information Department should prepare a full analysis of the tactical shift by the subversive centers, and lay out conclusions that will enable us to modify our operations;

c) undertaking a prognosis to establish the dangers stemming from the development of psychological warfare in the coming years, and the means of countering them from our side. A team of specialists should be formed to examine in detail two problems:

- What lines of attack will the enemy use as stabilization progresses in Poland?
- How to prepare for the possibility of subversive propaganda transmitted through the medium of satellite television?

The conclusions of the group should be presented to the CC Secretariat in the 4th quarter of this year.

d) the RSW “Press-Book-Movement” should ensure that the Research Institute on Contemporary Problems of Capitalism concentrates more than in the past on problems of ideological and propaganda subversion and focuses on practical requirements in this area. Its work should be based on material presenting the agreed position of the [CC] Departments of Information and Press, Radio, and Television;

e) a Polish Radio and Television editorial board should be established to serve as a workshop for counter-propaganda activities; it should compile documentary material (lies, propaganda works, examples of subversive campaigns permitting quick reaction, and perfecting counterpropaganda programs);

f) twice a year—more if deemed necessary—OBOP should conduct research on public opinion to gauge the depth and direction of the [social] destruction resulting from enemy propaganda;

g) undertaking and analyzing the results of a trial program of counterpropaganda at the local level (using voivodship Party committees and Party committees in large enterprises); enabling voivodship committees to exchange experience in the area of counterpropaganda;

h) working out a program of didactic publications for the coming year, and beginning distribution of popular scientific and literary works in the area of psychological warfare;

i) organizing in the 4th quarter of this year a seminar with the participation of representatives of the fraternal Parties from the socialist countries in order to exchange experiences in the area of counterpropaganda; begin continuing cooperation.

Information Department, CC, PUWP

(coordinated with the Press, Radio and Television and Ideological
Departments)

Warsaw, 9 March 1984

Source: AAN, Polish State Archives. Obtained by Lechosław Gawlikowski. Translated by A. Ross Johnson

Document No. 42: 1985. Interior Ministry Report on Information Leaked to RFE on Catholic Church

The Interior Ministry directive from which this document is excerpted ordered an investigation into how a confidential regime survey of attitudes toward the Catholic Church could have been leaked to RFE. In a follow-up report almost two years later, the Interior Ministry conceded on June 25, 1987 that many people had access to the report and it was impossible to determine who had provided RFE with the material.

[Excerpt]

Department IV Division III MIA Warsaw, 1985-08-01

Secret
7771/85

Report on Case Opening

Operational Case cryptonym "ANKIETA" ["Survey"]
92597, July 26, 1985

In January 1985, the Ministry of Culture and Art sent to individual voivodships a confidential questionnaire pertaining to the activities of the Catholic Church in the cultural sphere. Material collected in this way was processed by the Ministry Institute of Culture. The work was conducted by the Library Department, Houses of Culture and Social-Cultural Activities of the Ministry

On May 20 [1985] the Polish Section of Radio "Free Europe" in its program "Facts and Views" discussed the questionnaire, noting that the actions of the Ministry were one more indication of the battle of the PRL authorities with the Church. This touched off a propaganda campaign on the subject by RFE on May 21 and 22. It went on to quote information processed by the government offices of Warsaw Old Town and Kraków voivodship. This indicates that RFE has informants within the circle of people who had access to the referenced material.

Deputy Chief, IV DEP. III MI
Captain A. Minkowicz

Warsaw

June 25, 1987

Report on Case Closure

Operational case cryptonym "ANKIETA"

92597, date. 1985-07-26

Reference 7771/85

An operational case was opened on July 26, 1985, in connection with the leak to RFE and other Western centers of ideological subversion of material from the Ministry of Culture and Art concerning surveys in individual voivodships on the subject of the influence of the Catholic Church on culture. It was established in pursuing the case that Western subversive centers had the full text of the letter from the Ministry of Culture and Art to voivodship leaders, and partial texts of replies to that letter from five voivodships.

Following a detailed analysis of the circulation of documents utilized by the survey in question, personnel from the Ministry of Culture and Art and the Institute of Culture were eliminated as the source of the leak. It was also established that, apart from the Ministry and the Institute, several hundred people had access to the documents in question, including personnel of the culture and religion sections of voivodship governments. For this reason, despite the operational [investigation], it was not possible to identify those responsible for the leaks to RFE.

As a result of this case, the system of document distribution in the Ministry of Culture and Art has been tightened, and a special briefing has been given to administrative cadres on safeguarding official and state secrets. To date there are no new facts about the leaks.

Given this situation, and the time elapsed since the threat occurred, the case in its current form has been closed. Any future investigation of the problem, and control of individuals based on future information, will be conducted under case cryptonym "Kultura" [Culture] reference nr. 62295.

[signature illegible]

*Source: Urząd Ochrony Państwa Collection, Box 3, Hoover Archives.
Obtained and translated by A. Ross Johnson.*

USSR

Document No. 43: 1951. Report on Western Broadcasts to Poland and Council of Ministers Decree on Jamming the Broadcasts

The following documents describe how arrangements were made to jam Western broadcasts to Poland from Soviet and Polish territory in 1951. The translation is from the Russian documents published in Vostochnaya Yevropa v Dokumentakh Rossiyskikh Arkhivov [Eastern Europe in Documents of the Russian Archives], 1944–1953, Tom II, 1949–1953 (Moscow-Novosibirsk: Sibirski khronograf, 1998). The footnotes were supplied by the editors of that volume.

Report of the Chief of the Main Directorate of Radio Communications, State Communications Director Third Rank, A.I. Zharov, to USSR Minister of Communications N. D. Psurtsev, about broadcasts of the Voice of America, Radio Free Europe and other Western radio stations to Poland, and the setting up of radio protection on the territory of Poland and other countries of Eastern Europe.

Moscow

15 September 1951

TOP SECRET

TO USSR MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS

Comrade N. D. PSURTSEV

In accordance with USSR Council of Ministers Instruction N° 14148-rs of 11 August 1951, a group of specialists headed by Comrades Zharov, Savkova, and Pavlovich was sent to Poland and the questions entrusted to it by your directive were cleared up.

Besides all the required documents submitted by Polish organizations the group familiarized itself with the radio stations of the following cities: Warsaw, Szczecin, Gdansk, Gdynia, Krakow, Katowice, and Radom, and also with the Warsaw plants which produce receiving and transmitting equipment. At the same time, special listening was organized on the airwaves used by the stations broadcasting hostile, anti-Polish propaganda, and the strength of their reception was measured.

Anti-Polish radio transmissions are aired on short and medium wave in broadcasts from 15 to 30 minutes as follows:

1. US (Voice of America) broadcasts 13 times a day both directly from New York as well as via stations in the Western zone of Germany, London, and Tangiers. The number of wavelengths simultaneously active on different broadcast schedules is from three to eleven.
2. London (BBC) has one broadcast on three or four wavelengths.
3. Rome, two broadcasts on three or four wavelengths.
4. Vatican, two broadcasts on three wavelengths.
5. Belgrade, three broadcasts on one or two wavelengths.
6. Paris, two broadcasts on one to four wavelengths.
7. Madrid, one broadcast on one wavelength.
8. Ankara, one broadcast on one wavelength.
9. A radio station calling itself [Radio] Free Europe, has three broadcasts on one or two wavelengths.

The total number of anti-Polish broadcasts per day is 30.

The content of the broadcasts, especially those aired by the Voice of America, Radio Free Europe, and Madrid, is exceptionally hostile in nature and directed against the current political system of the Polish Republic.

Anti-Polish broadcasts are heard throughout the entire territory of Poland on almost all these frequencies.

No protection against anti-Polish broadcasts has been organized from Polish territory.

The jamming of anti-Polish broadcasts of the Voice of America instituted by stations of the Soviet Union beginning in July of 1950 only covers and effectively protects a small number of frequencies.

The network of individual Polish receivers, the main source for acquiring radio information, has been expanded across the entire territory of the country with considerable density, 4.5 receivers per 100 people on average (this number is almost four times greater than the average density of distribution of receivers in the Soviet Union).

Of a total number of 986,000 tube receivers, 49.6% are distributed among the 17 capital cities of the provinces and the remaining 50.4% of receivers are distributed in other cities and the countryside.

The presence of a large number of receivers dispersed throughout the country engenders the need to organize protection against anti-Polish broadcasts which is effective everywhere on Polish territory.

The radio broadcasting and communications equipment available in Poland is:

- a) 15 radio transmitters with a total power of 526 kilowatts located in nine provinces, including 12 medium-wave transmitters with a total power of 218.5 kilowatts.

All radio broadcast stations are connected to one another and Warsaw by an inter-city cable network;

- b) of the 62 communications transmitters with a total power of 395 kilowatts at four locations, 54 are shortwave transmitters with a total power of 336 kilowatts.

The small size of the territory of the Polish republic (approximately 600 km east to west and about the same north to south) precludes the possibility of protecting the entire territory from anti-Polish broadcasting on shortwave with their own equipment. This is explained by the fact that radio wave propagation occurs via two paths during shortwave operation: along the Earth's surface at a distance in the neighborhood of 10 kilometers from the transmitter, and by a wave reflected from the upper layers of

the atmosphere which is detected no nearer than several hundred kilometers from the transmitting station. This distance changes depending on the wavelength and time of operation and can be more than a thousand kilometers, so that, in the case of Poland, its own stations would be audible only outside its own territory.

The use of existing shortwave transmitters in the Warsaw, Szczecin, Gdansk, and Katowice regions to protect these cities is impossible in view of their poor location.

The creation of a special network of shortwave radio centers to protect Polish territory by ground wave alone is inadvisable since:

1. If the entire territory is to be covered, the total number of radio centers would be high (several hundred); it would cost a lot to build them and require the creation of a complex monitoring and adjustment [*kontrolno-korrektirovochnaya*] service, and a large number of specially trained personnel.
2. If only large cities are to be protected, a large number of receivers located in other cities and the countryside would remain completely unprotected.
3. The characteristics of the location of the cities in some provinces (Katowice and Gdansk), where they are either next to one another or nearby, forming an extensive settled area of great size, also create difficulties in protecting them from a single location.
4. Protection on medium wave could be accomplished from the territory of the republic itself; at the same time, partial protection of the country could be accomplished with the use of existing underused broadcast transmitters, but complete protection requires the manufacture and installation of additional low-power medium-wave transmitters.

In view of the above-mentioned difficulties in ensuring the complete protection of Poland on shortwave with its own equipment, a system of coordinated use of Polish and Soviet equipment for mutual protection from anti-Soviet and anti-Polish broadcasting would be the most technically suitable and economically beneficial.

The effectiveness of this system would be considerably increased by including other People's Democracies which have the equipment and which also need protection from hostile broadcasts (Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria).

According to our information, in November 1950, representatives of Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland discussed the issue of mutual aid and identified the need for mutual protection on short waves. However these decisions have not been implemented.

In 1950, the governments of Poland and Romania turned to the Soviet Union for help in the matter of protection against hostile radio propaganda.

Beginning in June of the same year, on your instructions, a Soviet station began to jam Voice of America broadcasts in the languages of countries of the People's Democracies.

However, the effectiveness of this jamming was low because of a scarcity of equipment and a lack of mutual coordination.

Part of the radio equipment available in Poland could be used for the purpose of protection immediately, to conduct simple organizational and technical measures.

The means exist in Poland for a subsequent increase in the amount of equipment for protection.

Polish industry has already managed to produce a small batch of transmitters and, according to this year's Plan, will deliver seven short-wave transmitters to the Ministry of Posts and Telegraph with a power of 10 kilowatts each.

Transmitter production capacity could be increased if necessary.

The restored radio station building in the city of Radom has sufficient space which might be used to install new transmitters.

On the basis of the ideas indicated above I think it advisable that work to protect the territory of Poland from anti-Polish propaganda via radio be conducted in the following manner:

1. Protection on medium wave is to be accomplished from Polish territory, using the resources of the Polish republic.
2. Protection on shortwave is to be accomplished chiefly from the territory of the Soviet Union, enlisting the equipment of the Polish republic to protect certain regions of the USSR from anti-Soviet broadcasts.

In a conversation with me, Comrade Bierut confirmed the possibility of using Polish radio equipment for these purposes.

I consider it desirable to study the capability of the countries of the People's Democracies to participate in a common system of mutual protection against hostile radio propaganda as a measure to increase the effectiveness of the struggle against hostile broadcasts.

The development of a mutual protection plan, identifying the amount of resources and the system for organizing the work, is necessary to solve the problems of coordinating equipment to protect the Polish republic and the Soviet Union.¹

Chief of the Main Directorate of
Radio Communications, State
Communications Director, 3rd Class

A. ZHAROV

Source: State Archive of the Russian Federation, GARF, F. 5446, Op. 59, D. 1725, 6–3 [sic].

¹ On 24 September 1951, N. D. Psurtsev reported draft USSR Council of Ministers decrees [*postanovleniya*] prepared in the USSR Ministry of Communications to V. M. Molotov. They envisioned the development of a plan to protect the territory of Poland and individual territories of the Soviet Union by 15 October 1951, and the preparation within two months of a plan for joint radio protection of the territory of the USSR, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria. It was proposed to convene a special meeting of representatives of these countries in Moscow to discuss this latter plan. The Council of Ministers decree on these issues was adopted on 24 October 1951. See GARF. F. 5446. Op. 59. D. 1724. P. 11; AVP RF. F. 0122. Op. 36. P. 297. D. 13. 133–136.

TOP SECRET

USSR COUNCIL OF MINISTERS
DECREE
N° 4028-1849ss of 24 October 1951
Moscow, the Kremlin

The Institution of Jamming of Anti-Polish Propaganda via Radio on Polish Territory

In order to combat hostile propaganda via radio on the territory of the Polish republic² the USSR Council of Ministers DECREES:

1. That the Ministry of Communications (Comrade Psurtsev) should be charged with ensuring the institution of jamming on Polish territory of anti-Polish propaganda via shortwave radio beginning on 1 December 1951 using Soviet equipment and helping the Polish Government organize protection from hostile propaganda on medium wave using Polish equipment.
2. That the Ministry of Communications be charged [with]:
 - a) using up to 12 shortwave broadcast transmitters located at Soviet radio stations to institute jamming of hostile propaganda against Poland via radio;
 - b) sending Comrade A.I. Zharov, the Chief of the Main Directorate of Radio Communications, and Comrade P.K. Sergeyev, senior engineer of the Ministry of Communications, to Poland, within five days, with a group of experienced specialists (four or five people), for three months, to help organize a protection service and convey the experience of the Ministry of Communications in this area.

² As archival documents testify, Western radio propaganda caused great anxiety to the Polish Party leaders, who regarded it as the most widespread and active form of hostile propaganda. For example, in the autumn of 1951, J. Prima, First Secretary of the Party Provincial Committee in Szczecin, told the Soviet Consul in Szczecin, I. S. Borisov, that "receivers are widely distributed throughout the villages, and where there are none the kulaks organize community listening and then pass on verbally what was heard." See RTsKhIDNI. F. 17. Op. 17. D. 619. 113.

3. That the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Comrade Vyshinsky) and the Ministry of Communications (Comrade Psurtsev) be charged with submitting proposals within two weeks regarding the necessary measures for protection from hostile propaganda via radio based on the joint use of Soviet, Polish, Czechoslovak, Hungarian, Romanian, and Bulgarian equipment.

Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers

I. STALIN

Administrator,
USSR Council of Ministers

M. POMAZNEV

Source: State Archive of the Russian Federation, GARF, F. 5446, Op. 59, D. 1724, 12. Translated by Gary Goldberg.

Document No. 44: 1957. Letter to Khrushchev from Radio
Moscow German-Language Service Urging Creation of
Warsaw Pact Radio Station Analogous to RFE

The following letter to Khrushchev in 1957 by members of the German Service of Radio Moscow proposed establishing a Soviet international broadcaster structured along the lines of Radio Free Europe, with formal independence from the government. Indirectly it acknowledges the effectiveness of RFE broadcasts.

Dear Nikita Sergeyevich!

We ask you to forgive us for contacting you directly, but the question we would like to raise is outside the competence of any specific department.

Counterrevolutionary revolt in Hungary has showed the effectiveness of the radio station Free Europe, especially in launching propagandist air balloons and an underground network of informants and provocateurs.

The effectiveness of Free Europe, in our opinion, can be explained by—besides socio-economic reasons—the following factors:

1. The scale of propagandist activity.
2. Formal independence from any kind of state power.
3. Wide involvement of political émigrés and refugees from European countries of People's Democracy.

The scale of propagandist activity of Free Europe can be judged on the basis of the following data. The radio station Free Europe alone, which covers only the European People's Democracies, employs around 1,300 people, which is almost as many as our Main Broadcasting Directorate that broadcasts to nearly all countries of the world.

It should be noted that the scale of our radio propaganda abroad is nothing in comparison with that of the West. Americans, for instance, in order to spread propaganda in just one country, relay several programs of the Voice of America and maintain a special radio station called RIAS in Western Berlin, which has up to 1,000 employees, consisting primarily of native Germans. To appreciate these numbers, consider that the German

broadcasting team based at Moscow Radio has only 30 people, none of whom has come from Germany within the last 20 years.

England, while suffering from a chronic budget deficit which obliges it to reduce even military expenses, is not reducing appropriations for radio propaganda. Approximately 14,000 employees work at the BBC at this time. Around 4,000 work in foreign broadcasting alone, which is many times higher than foreign broadcasting in Moscow radio.

The formal independence of Free Europe from any kind of state power provides it with unlimited discretion, and gives it the air of being objective and impartial. Our radio is at a disadvantage in this respect as well.

Counter-revolutionary émigrés from socialist countries have many opportunities for delivering inflammatory propaganda to those countries through [Radio] Free Europe, [Radio] Liberation, and other propaganda institutions. Our friends in the underground and emigration, for example, Greek, Arabic, Spanish and Iranian Communists, do not have such opportunities. In contrast to Free Europe or Liberation, Moscow Radio, being a state-run radio station, does not meddle in the internal affairs of other countries in conducting its propaganda. This deprives us of many opportunities to influence the formation of public opinion in those countries.

It is in our interest to provide our friends and other elements of opposition in capitalist countries with the opportunity to conduct propaganda on the radio and by other means in their countries.

Taking this into consideration, we consider it expedient to establish under our unofficial leadership an organization on the territory of the Soviet Union and several other People's Democracies, which in its functions, purpose, and methods would be, to a certain extent, analogous to Free Europe. We are convinced that, with the help of such an organization, which would have at its disposal radio stations formally independent from the government, and which could launch propagandist air balloons (when living with the wolves, howl as a wolf), it would be possible for us to achieve great success in our propaganda efforts. If, for instance, a powerful radio transmitter was installed near the Greek border with several dozen Greek and Cypriot propagandists assigned to it, an atmosphere similar to that which has prevailed in the [Middle] East for the last few months could affect England and the rest of NATO. The same can be applied to a number of other weak spots of the capitalist world.

In order for such propagandist centers to be formally independent from the Soviet government, it could be announced that they are funded by private donations from separate individuals and nonpartisan organizations (exactly the way it is done by Free Europe).

The activity of such radio stations and the adoption of the methods of Free Europe would, undoubtedly, elicit protests in the West, but to rebut these protests would not be much of a problem. In a worst-case scenario these radio stations could be closed down. Even in that case we would be on the winning side.

With Communist greetings,

Members of the CPSU:

I. Romantsov - Editor-in-chief of broadcasts to
Germany

[signed]

A. Turtushkin - Deputy Editor-in-chief of broadcasts
to Germany

[signed]

A. Zholkver - Secretary for Party organization of the
editorial staff

[signed]

17 January 1957

Source: Archives of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Obtained by Michael Nelson. Translated by Volodymyr Valkov.

Document No. 45: 1958. Report to Central Committee
about Press Conference on “Subversive Activities”
of Western Radios

Description of a 1958 press conference in Moscow organized by the State Committee on Cultural Relations, with KGB assistance, to discredit Western broadcasts to the USSR and Eastern Europe. The press conference drew on the presence of alleged former employees of the radio stations.

CC CPSU

In accordance with the decision of the CC CPSU on 12 February of this year, the State Committee on Cultural Relations conducted a press conference for Soviet and foreign correspondents on the following topic: “On Provocative and Subversive Activities of American Radio Stations.” The press conference was prepared in cooperation with the USSR KGB.

At the press conference, the Head of the Publishing Office, Comrade Zinchenko K.E., presented a report on this issue to familiarize participants with certain facts about provocative and subversive anti-Soviet propaganda by the following American radio stations: Voice of America, Free Europe, Liberation, and a few others.

Vinogradov B.I., Oleynik G.V., Pelekays G.P., Zhukov V.S., Kopeychikov R.V. and Zibrov N.V., all of whom had worked for the above-mentioned radio stations, testified to Soviet and foreign journalists at the press conference about the methods of involving Soviet displaced persons to work with American radio stations on compiling programs that contained inflammatory appeals to Soviet citizens, slanderous and malicious fabrications against the Soviet Union, the Red Army, etc.

More than 120 Soviet and foreign journalists attended the press conference. No incidents occurred in the course of the press conference. Panelists conducted themselves with dignity.

Soviet and foreign journalists asked a round of questions. Correspondents were interested in certain details about the methods employed by American radio stations in fabricating deceitful and libelous messages about the Soviet Union, about the methods of intimidating Soviet dis-

placed persons with the intention of getting them to work for those radio stations, about the attitude of the German population toward activities of American radio stations within the FRG, etc.

Correspondents were given extensive answers to all of these questions.

Materials from the press conference were published in issues of all major newspapers dated February 13 of this year, and were also used by radio programs in the USA, England, and other countries.

It should be pointed out that the press conference made a very favorable impression on all the foreign correspondents that attended, and provided them with an opportunity to take detailed notes on the subject. As expected, bourgeois newspapers and agencies are still hushing up this press conference, limiting their stories to very concise, formal comments.

[signed]
G. Zhukov

September 15, 1958

_N1193s

Source: Archives of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Obtained by Michael Nelson. Translated by Volodymyr Valkov.

Document No. 46: 1959. KGB Report on Uneven Quality of Jamming of Western Broadcasts

The following KGB document reports on problems jamming Western radio stations in a range of Soviet cities. It indicates times and frequencies on which Western radio broadcasts were clearly audible and Soviet jamming was ineffective.

USSR
Committee for State Security of the USSR
Council of Ministers

21 May 1959

No. 1392

Moscow

SECRET
18030
21 May 1959
33a

To be returned to the CPSU CC
General Department

CPSU CC

(To the Directorate of Propaganda and Agitation CPSU CC
in Soviet Republics)

Enclosed are materials on the state of jamming of anti-Soviet radio programs, summary of data regarding random quality control conducted by the Committee for State Security in April of this year, and a record of the contents of radio programs of the Voice of America and BBC in the Russian language, covering a period between 24 April and 3 May 1959.

ATTACHMENT: 358 pages of text.

CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE FOR STATE SECURITY

[signed] A. Shelepin

Secret

Copy No.1

NOTE

On the State of Jamming Anti-Soviet Radio Programs
of Foreign Radio Stations

In the period lasting from April 8 until April 15 of this year, the KGB, under the supervision of the Council of Ministers, conducted random quality control on the jamming of anti-Soviet radio broadcasting by foreign radio stations in Leningrad, Moscow, Minsk, Kiev, Tbilisi, Tashkent, Sverdlovsk, Rostov, Chita, Khabarovsk, Vladivostok, Riga, Petroplavsk-Kamchka as well as the suburbs of the afore-mentioned locations, and also in Grodno, Brest, Borisov, Molodechno, Slutsk, Smolensk, Kaliningrad, Nizhny Tagil, Kamensk-Uralsk, Pervouralsk, Chimkent, Novocherkassk, Taganrog, Shakhty, Kuntsevo, Serpukhov, Mozhaysk, Klin, Artem, Suchane, Nakhodka.

Materials demonstrate that as a result of poor jamming, the programs of the radio station Voice of America were listened to in the majority of controlled locations. Thus, Russian language programs in the suburbs of Kiev were unsatisfactorily jammed on 8 frequencies between 0530–0600, on 5 frequencies between 1800–30, on 6 frequencies between 2100–30; in the suburbs of Riga on 5 frequencies between 0530–0600; in the city of Brest on 6 frequencies between 0530–0600; in the city of Nizhny Tagil on 8 frequencies between 0100–30 and on 4 frequencies between 0000–30 and 1800–30; in the city of Kozhaysk on 3 frequencies between 1800–30; in the suburbs of Riga on 6 frequencies in Latvian between 0500–30, and on 4 frequencies between 2030–2100.

Systematic reception of programs by the Voice of America on one to two frequencies is possible in the suburbs of Leningrad, Minsk, Khabarovsk, Tashkent, Chita and other populated areas between 0100–30, 0530–0600, 1230–1300, 1800–30 and 2100–30.

Programs of the BBC radio station reached the suburbs of Kiev on 11 frequencies between 0645–0715, on 8 frequencies between 1800–30, on 7 frequencies between 2045–2115; the suburbs of Leningrad on 7 frequencies between 0645–0715; Riga on 8 frequencies; Minsk on 5 frequencies; the city of Borisov on 2 frequencies; the city of Kaliningrad on 3 frequencies. A similar situation was also observed between 0215–30, 1800–30, 2330–2400.

On one to two frequencies at different times of the day for the duration of 10-30 minutes, programs of the radio station Liberty (formerly known as Liberation) were listened to in the suburbs of Moscow, Tbilisi, Minsk, Kiev as well as Nizhny Tagil, Smolensk, Brest and others.

In Petropavlovsk-Kamchatka, Khabarovsk, Chita and such cities as Artem, Suchan and Nakhodka (Primorsky region), programs from a branch office of this radio station, located on the island of Taiwan, were broadcast freely on frequencies 15345 and 17755 KHz.

Programs of the radio station “Nasha Rossiya” [Our Russia] were listened to primarily at night time from 2235–0445 in the 11400–2000 KHz range and 17600–17900 KHz range in the suburbs of Kiev, Tbilisi and such cities as Kamensk-Uralsk, Serpukhov, Minsk, Borisov, Smolensk, Mozhaysk, Klin and others.

Programs of the radio station “Svobodnaya Rossiya” [Free Russia] in the 11400–11900 KHz range were broadcast freely at night time (2025–2300) in such cities as Serpukhov, Minsk, Borisov, Smolensk, Molodechno as well as in the suburbs of Kiev and Leningrad.

In the suburbs of Khabarovsk, programs of the radio station “Baikal” were listened to regularly on one to two frequencies. These programs were also listened to in the suburbs of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatka, Chita, Tashkent, Tbilisi, and in such cities as Artem, Suchane, Nakhodka.

A capacity to listen to programs of the radio stations Vatican, Rome, Novaya Ukraina [New Ukraine], Canada, Madrid, and Baltic in the suburbs of Kiev, Riga, Leningrad and such cities as Klin, Mozhaysk, Molodechno, Brest, Kaliningrad was simultaneously detected on one to two frequencies.

Anti-Soviet radio programs were poorly jammed in such cities as Novocherkassk, Shakhty and especially Taganrog. Thus, in Taganrog, radio programs of the Voice of America, BBC, Liberty, Nasha Rossiya [Our Russia] and Osoby Sputnik [Special Satellite] were regularly broadcast on frequencies above 12 MHz.

HEAD OF THE FOURTH SPECIAL DIRECTORATE of the KGB, USSR CM,
Major-General of the Engineer-Technical Services

[signed]
P. Kuznetsov

19 May 1959

Source: Archives of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Obtained by Michael Nelson. Translated by Volodymyr Valkov.

Document No. 47: 1960. Central Committee Analysis
of Western Radio Propaganda, Decree to Combat it,
and Implementation Responses
from Latvia, Estonia and Uzbekistan

The following set of documents include a report from the head of the Department of Agitation and Propaganda of the Central Committee of the CPSU detailing the shortcomings of Soviet broadcast media in countering Western broadcasts; a Central Committee decree on measures to counter "hostile radio propaganda;" and reports from the Central Committees of several Union Republics on actions taken to fulfill these measures. The document is noteworthy for its criticism of the poor distribution of Soviet newscasts in the Eastern part of the USSR, and acknowledgement of how Western broadcasts have filled this void. An interesting point is made on the habit of adapting Soviet-made receivers to capture Western shortwave broadcasts.

CC CPSU

Measures to Vigorously Counteract Hostile Radio Propaganda
Directed at the Soviet Population

The CC CPSU Department of Agitation and Propaganda for the Union Republics has examined the status of work to protect the Soviet population from hostile radio propaganda and the organization of radio broadcasts from Moscow, republic, and oblast capitals for Soviet listeners during the broadcast of foreign radio stations to the Soviet Union.

At the present time the total duration of hostile programming directed at the Soviet population is 50 hours a day on various radio stations and languages, of which 40 are in Russian. Voice of America alone broadcasts 16 hours and 30 minutes of programming for the USSR, including eight hours in Russian, two hours in Ukrainian, one and a half hours each in Lithuanian, Latvian, and Estonian, and one hour in Armenian and Georgian. The total BBC programming to the USSR in Russian has been reduced. At the present time it is two hours a day.

In September 1959, blanket jamming of the Voice of America was halted, followed by that of the BBC in March of this year. Only anti-So-

viet and slanderous materials [in the broadcasts] are now jammed. In the first months, of Voice of America programming on average no more than three to five percent was jammed. American propaganda to the USSR concentrated most of its attention on trying to convince Soviet people of the superiority of the American way of life, and that the capitalist system is supposedly built on freedom and a concern for human welfare. The tone of radio broadcasts in the first months was outwardly benevolent, even ingratiating.

The total amount of anti-Soviet materials in Voice of America programming increased continuously beginning in March of this year, and therefore 25–30% of it was jammed in March and April, and 75–95% in May. In recent months Voice of America has been broadcasting anti-Soviet materials somewhat less, and therefore an average of 40–60% of their programming is being jammed.

BBC broadcasts fewer slanderous materials than Voice of America and therefore the percentage of jamming of its programming is considerably less. Recently, 5–20% of BBC programming has been jammed. The amount of programming to the USSR has been reduced in connection with the cessation of blanket jamming of BBC in the spring of this year, and broadcasts in the languages of the peoples of the USSR other than Russian have ceased. As a rule, in order to win listener popularity BBC broadcasts materials in an outwardly benevolent tone and therefore often presents some events of international life [in a different way] than Voice of America.

At the present time there are up to 20 million radios in the Soviet Union capable of receiving foreign radio stations. It is difficult to draw a clear picture of how many people in the USSR listen to foreign radio stations but there is circumstantial data which indicates a certain interest in foreign radio stations.

It was established in March of this year that in Tajikistan they listen to foreign radio stations not only in apartments but also in public places (teahouses, etc.), primarily because of the low level of republican broadcasting. The CC CPSU has especially directed the attention of the Tajikistan Central Committee to these facts.

The alteration of radios to listen to foreign radio stations has taken on massive proportions in Georgia, Azerbaijan, and in Perm, Moscow, Lugansk, and other *oblasts*. For 250 rubles, war invalids who know radio equipment, and some amateur radio operators, will install a shortwave band on radios in the population's possession, starting with the 10-meter

[band]. One can receive only foreign radio stations on these wavelengths. Even in Moscow, in GUM and other department stores, people without an occupation approach those buying a receiver with a proposal to install an additional shortwave band in the radio.

In conversations with the CC CPSU Department of Propaganda and Agitation, the chairmen of the Uzbek, Lvov, Odessa, Tomsk, and other radio committees have confirmed that there are cases of regular listening to Voice of America and BBC programming where they live. Questions put to lecturers and speakers, and also letters to the Central Committee, Radio Committee, and other organizations, are evidence of this.

As has been established by an inspection, the organization of radio broadcasts from Moscow and also from republican, *kray*, and *oblast* capitals does not help divert interest from foreign radio stations. For example, at the present time Soviet radio broadcasting is organized so that in the morning and especially in the evening hours the population of the Eastern regions of the USSR, from Chita to the Volga region, is essentially left without our radio information about what happened during the day in the country and abroad. In Chita the last edition of radio information is broadcast at 2000 local time. It consists only of reports about life in the *oblast*, and the population of the Transbaikal does not receive any information by radio from Moscow during the evening hours. The evening edition of *Poslednie Izvestiya* [Latest News] broadcast from Moscow at 1900 is received in Chita at 0100 local time and the population does not listen to it. The Voice of America broadcasts programming for the regions of the Far East and Siberia at the very same time, at 1600 Moscow time, or 2200 Chita time.

Irkutsk, Krasnoyarsk, Novosibirsk, Omsk, Sverdlovsk, Chelyabinsk, Kurgan, Perm, Ufa, and other [cities] are in the same situation. Regions of the Urals listen to the evening edition of the *Latest News* from Moscow at 2100 local time, but the night edition of the *Latest News* from Moscow is received in the Urals at 0030 when the population is already asleep. Local information in Sverdlovsk, Chelyabinsk, and Kurgan is broadcast at 1800–1900 and consists only of reports about the life of their *oblast*. Thus the population of the Urals, Siberia, and other Eastern regions of the Soviet Union remain without our radio information in the evening and can only find out about events in the USSR and foreign countries by radio from Voice of America and BBC broadcasts.

Making use of this, the Voice of America has restructured its broadcasts in Russian so that programs which attract attention with new infor-

mation are regularly broadcast to the Soviet Union. For example, in the morning hours, bearing in mind that Moscow Radio broadcasts the *Latest News* at 0600, 0700, 0800, and 0900, the Voice of America broadcasts at 0530, 0630, 0730, and 0930 so that Soviet listeners can also receive American information. In the evening hours, the Voice of America broadcasts half an hour of programming in Russian every hour from 1800 to 0200.

The primary content of a Voice of America broadcast is a brief tententious description of the main events in the USSR and foreign countries calculated to attract the listener's attention with the speed and freshness of information and commentary on current events.

The State Committee on Radio and Television Broadcasting and many local Party bodies have not restructured their broadcasting so that listeners can be enticed away from foreign radio stations by varied, interesting programs. During hours when the Voice of America and BBC broadcasts are aired, national and local radio broadcasting make do mainly with discussions of little interest, programs targeted to industrial and agricultural workers, and mediocre concerts.

After halting blanket jamming of Voice of America and BBC, many *oblast* and *kray* committees and the Central Committees of the Communist Parties of the union republics grew lax in their attitudes to the question of combating hostile radio propaganda; for example, not one *oblast* committee nor CC of a union republic raised the question of changing the procedure for broadcasting information via radio, in particular to the Eastern regions of the country.

In order to organize active countermeasures against hostile radio propaganda and to best protect the population from it we consider it necessary to immediately charge the State Committee for Radio and Television Broadcasting and the USSR Ministry of Communications with introducing special radio broadcasts from Moscow in the evening hours for the Eastern regions of the country no later than 1 August of this year, and in the morning hours beginning on 1 October of this year, providing in them the broadcast of a 20–25-minute edition of the *Latest News* each hour. In the opinion of the Ministry of Communications and the State Committee for Radio and Television Broadcasting, the technical resources can be found by using existing radio stations.

At the same time it is advisable to charge the Ministry of Communications and the Radio Committee [sic], assisted by the CC CPSU Department of Agitation and Propaganda and the Committee for State Security,

with investigating the possibility of using individual powerful jamming stations for radio broadcasting. Since October 1959 the amount of hostile radio propaganda to the USSR has been reduced by more than half: the Baikal, Kavkaz, and other radio centers have ceased operation, the amount of BBC broadcasts has been reduced, etc. In light of this, several stations engaged in jamming could be used for broadcasting, which would improve audibility.

Local Party bodies and the State Committee for Radio and Television Broadcasting should also be charged with reexamining the schedule of national and local broadcasting, and the question of making greater practical usage of radio stations during broadcasts of the Voice of America and BBC, within a month, with the aim of providing programming during these hours which enjoy greater popularity with the population.

The question of specific measures to organize active countermeasures against hostile radio propaganda has been tentatively examined in the CC CPSU Department of Agitation and Propaganda with the involvement of managers of the State Committee for Radio and Television Broadcasting, a number of republican and *oblast* radio committees, and also representatives of the USSR Ministry of Communications and the USSR Committee for State Security.

A draft CC CPSU decree concerning measures to vigorously counteract hostile radio propaganda is attached.

The adoption of a decision on this question will facilitate bringing the questions of radio broadcasting and the struggle against hostile radio propaganda to the attention of local Party bodies.

Chief of the CC CPSU Department of
Agitation and Propaganda for Union
Republics

[signature] L. Ilychev

Chief of a sector of the Department

[signature] G. Kazakov

15 July 1960

COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE SOVIET UNION. CENTRAL
COMMITTEE

N° St-158/6-s
21.VII.1960

DECREE
of the SECRETARIAT Protocol N° 158 § 6 of 19.VII.1960
Measures to Vigorously Counteract Hostile Radio Propaganda

It is noted that the CC of the Communist Parties of the union republics, Party *kray* committees and *oblast* committees, and radio broadcasting bodies have not taken the proper steps to vigorously counteract hostile radio propaganda in connection with the cessation of blanket jamming of radio broadcasts of the Voice of America and BBC. As a rule, radio broadcasting from Moscow, republic, *kray*, and *oblast* capitals is conducted without a proper assessment of the organization and content of hostile radio propaganda directed to the population of the Soviet Union; during Voice of America and BBC broadcasts Soviet radio stations often rebroadcast poor programs which do not distract the attention of radio listeners from foreign radio stations and are not of interest to the majority of the population.

Broadcasts of current information about life in the Soviet Union and events abroad for the Eastern regions of the USSR by Soviet radio stations are especially poorly organized. The population of republics and *oblasts* with at least a one-hour time difference with Moscow is essentially left without broadcasts of Soviet radio information in the evening hours, while the Voice of America broadcasts 30-minute programs of tententiously selected news and commentary in Russian every hour from 1800–0200.

In order to more vigorously counteract hostile radio propaganda and to organize broadcasts of extensive information about current events for the population of the Eastern regions of the country via Soviet radio stations the CC CPSU decrees:

1. The State Committee for Radio and Television Broadcasting of the USSR Council of Ministers and the USSR Ministry of Communications are charged with:

- a) no later than 1 August of this year introducing a special daily radio broadcast for the Eastern regions of the Soviet Union from 1700 to 2200, providing the broadcast from Moscow with 20–25-minute editions of the *Latest News* for this program at the start of each hour. Considering that these editions are designed for various regions of the USSR which are in different time zones, it is considered advisable to supplement the main information with new and recent reports. Include in the *Latest News* brief commentary on current events, a digest of the evening edition of *Izvestiya*, etc;
- b) organizing additional radio broadcasts from Moscow beginning in the morning hours of 1 October 1960 when the Voice of America and BBC are broadcasting programs in order to distract the attention of listeners from foreign radio stations with the varied content and high level of Soviet radio broadcasts;
- c) examining [together with] the CC CPSU [Department of] Agitation and Propaganda for the Union Republics [and] the Committee for State Security of the USSR Council of Ministers the question of the partial use of individual powerful radio stations engaged in jamming operations for radio broadcasting.

2. Charging the CC's of the Communist Parties of the union republics and the *oblast* committees of the autonomous republics with ensuring the broadcast of the *Latest News* in the main language of the republic during Voice of America broadcasts in the national languages of the republics, employing mainly the translation of information and radio reports from Moscow to do this. Organize the rebroadcast of varied information and music programs via local radio stations during Voice of America and BBC broadcasts in Russian and Ukrainian.

3. Suggesting that CPSU committees of *krais*, *oblasts*, and autonomous republics with at least a one-hour time difference with Moscow provide a rebroadcast of one or two editions of the *Latest News* from Moscow in the evening via local radio stations and broadcasting centers, depending on local conditions.

4. Charging the State Committee for Radio and Television Broadcasting of the USSR Council of Ministers with:

- a) organizing the transmission to union republics by teletype, where possible, or tape recording off the air, of the most important information, commentary, and a digest of the newspaper *Izvestiya* for translation and broadcast over republic radio;
- b) after organizing the most interesting and varied programs during the hours of radio broadcasts from abroad, reexamining the schedule of radio and television broadcasting from Moscow and, by agreement with local Party bodies, [reviewing] the procedure for the operation of radio stations and television centers in republics, *krais*, and *oblasts*;
- c) providing regular radio broadcasts for Soviet listeners that denounce hostile radio propaganda and explain, with specific examples, the essence of the policy of the imperialist countries, the real living conditions of the workers, and the morale and mood of capitalist society. Ensure the rapid delivery of counterpropaganda materials to union republics and autonomous republics for them to be broadcast by radio in the national languages;
- d) and, reporting the implementation of this decree to the CC CPSU by 1 November 1960.

CC SECRETARY

Sent to: Comrades Ilychev, Kaftanov, Pourtsev, Shelepin, Moskovsky, *oblast* committees, *krai* committees, and CC's of the Communist Parties of the union republics.

THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE COMMUNIST PART OF LATVIA

1 October 1960

Top Secret

N° 495ss

[3720[8] partly legible filing stamp]

[Handwritten note at the bottom of the first page: "Memo. CC CP of Latvia information. Sent for information. [[two illegible signatures]]"]

TO THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

Measures to implement the CC CPSU Secretariat decree of 19 July 1960 "Measures to Vigorously Counteract Hostile Radio Propaganda Directed at the Soviet Population"

In order to implement the CC CPSU Secretariat decree of 19 July 1960 the CC CP of Latvia has planned to carry out the following measures:

1. Beginning in October of this year the Committee for Radio and Television Broadcasting of the Latvian SSR Council of Ministers will broadcast varied information and music programs during the Voice of America broadcasts at 2030 and 2330.
2. Beginning on 15 November of this year it is planned to organize a center for tape recording foreign radio broadcasts in Latvia to use the acquired material in the counterpropaganda work of press and radio organizations; beginning in November 1960 the number of radio broadcasts for Latvians abroad will be increased to eight per month. It is planned to select letters from abroad received by the population which tell of the difficult life of workers in capitalist countries for use in the press, on the radio, and in speeches by agitators and lecturers.

The Committee for Radio and Television Broadcasting has been given the task of constantly improving the ideological and political level of counterpropaganda broadcasts; more clearly showing that Soviet Latvia is flourishing in the family of fraternal republics; more quickly using the stories of Soviet tourists who witness the difficult lives of workers in capitalist countries; making more regular use of the speeches of repatriates, re-emigrants, and foreign tourists who have pro-Soviet sentiments to de-

nounce the militarists, revanchists, and the heads of reactionary Latvian exile groups; and also better handling of official material about international events.

Secretary of the CC CP of Latvia

[signature]
A. Miglinik

THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE COMMUNIST PART OF UZBEKISTAN

N° 816
24.XI.19[60]
Tashkent

[illegible filing stamp]

to the CC CPSU

MEMORANDUM

concerning the progress in implementing the CC CPSU decree
“Measures to Vigorously Counteract Hostile Radio Propaganda”

The CC CPSU decree “Measures to Vigorously Counteract Hostile Radio Propaganda” was discussed in the Bureau of the CC of the CP of Uzbekistan, which adopted the following decree.

The following work has been done to implement the CC CPSU decree.

Beginning on 20 August 1960 the time of broadcasts on the 150-kilowatt long-wave transmitter and the 50-kilowatt shortwave transmitter has been extended from 0200 to 0430 Tashkent time. Thus republican radio broadcasting is now done from 0600 to 0430. In addition, the first Moscow program is rebroadcast via short-wave transmitter from 0600 to 2300 on the 61.85 meter wavelength.

Broadcasts in Uzbek and Tajik are aired on the second program on the 750 meter wavelength and also via UHF FM.

Programming and the broadcasting network have been reexamined in order to vigorously counteract hostile radio propaganda. Programs of the most popular musical and other artistic works and also of current events are being organized on Uzbek radio during those hours when

Voice of America and BBC broadcast. A daily program in Uzbek, "Radio Commentator at the Microphone," has been introduced in which counterpropaganda materials received from Moscow are used. Discussions on economic, international, and sociopolitical topics are broadcast daily.

Radio broadcasts are made daily from 0920 to 1330 in Uzbek and Tajik and include discussions of a radio commentator and a *Latest News* edition. They use fresh information reported by radio from Moscow and also materials received via teletype from TASS and through the republican telegraph agency. Concerts of popular Uzbek and Tajik music, the music of other peoples of the USSR, and also other artistic programs of interest to a majority of the population are broadcast during these same hours.

Discussions are regularly transmitted in Uzbek and Russian for Soviet radio listeners denouncing the hostile propaganda of Voice of America, BBC, and other radio stations and also materials providing specific examples of the essence of the policy of the imperialist countries, the real living conditions of the workers, and the morale and mood of capitalist society.

SECRETARY OF THE CC CP OF UZBEKISTAN

[illegible signature]

COMMUNIST PARTY OF ESTONIA

CENTRAL COMMITTEE

[letterhead]

N° 0168

Secret

31 [rest of date illegible, possible October]

40822

TO THE CPSU CENTRAL COMMITTEE

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Estonia has initiated a number of measures to implement the CC CPSU decree of 19.VII.1960, "Measures to Vigorously Counteract Hostile Radio Propaganda Directed at the Soviet Population."

Changes have been introduced in the programming of Estonian radio. The most popular local information programs are broadcast when Voice of America is being broadcast in Estonian: *Ekho Dnya* [Echo of the

Day] at 2130, and the latest news and sports programs at 2300. Broadcasts of the 1st Moscow program are rebroadcast through the 2nd Estonian radio program in order to cover the Voice of America broadcasts in Russian and Ukrainian.

In order to increase the efficiency of counterpropaganda on the radio, the Estonian SSR Radio and Television Broadcasting Committee has established direct telegraph communications with the Information Department of All-Union Radio (until now such communications were only with the Department for Broadcasts Abroad). Estonian radio receives commentary by telegraph on questions of international life and materials about the latest news. However, it ought to be noted that these materials sometimes arrive late and their selection is arbitrary. The materials of All-Union Radio ought to be sent to the republic before they are put on the air in Moscow so that a local radio station has an opportunity to broadcast the latest news throughout the country right after the broadcasts from Moscow.

Steps are being taken to improve the ideological content of local counterpropaganda broadcasts; they are now being given a sharper and more combative character. Estonian radio is also resorting, when necessary, to polemics as the sharpest and most effective form of counterpropaganda to refute hostile statements of the foreign press and radio which distort reality. The majority of international commentators whose appearances are being organized three or four times a week in *Ekho Dnya* broadcasts are successfully accomplishing this task.

Estonian radio is organizing a series of special broadcasts in response to the provocative and slanderous statements of the foreign press and radio. For example, in refuting the mendacious articles of M. Torsen who arrived in the Estonian SSR last summer, which were published in the Swedish émigré newspaper *Eesti Paevaleht*, an Estonian radio correspondent was in the same places about which Torsen wrote and a special program was broadcast on the radio exposing the false concoction of the émigré newspaper.

The discussion held on 21 October of this year about the dreadful and disenfranchised status of Estonian emigrants in capitalist countries, especially in West Germany; a series of materials "The Hills of Kalev-Liyya Accuse" (about the atrocities of the German fascist invaders and their accomplices hiding abroad, now caught in new crimes against humanity); materials about crimes during the years of the fascist occupation, and about the reactionary activity at the present time of Rebane, the

head of the Estonian émigré community in Britain—all this and others can be singled out as the sharpest counterpropaganda programs of Estonian radio. In addition, a series of reports about the achievements of the industry, agriculture, and culture of the Estonian SSR were broadcast to counterbalance the false propaganda of the foreign press and radio.

Material on the above subjects is broadcast in both programs for radio listeners in the republic and broadcasts abroad.

In order to react more quickly to [one or two words illegible] of the Voice of America, the main editor on duty at the [Committee for] Radio and Television Broadcasting of the Estonian SSR has been charged with the responsibility [one or two words illegible] keeping special track of the above broadcasts [one or two words illegible] in order to have an opportunity to daily broadcast by radio [one word illegible] the misleading reports of the Voice of America.

SECRETARY OF THE CC CP OF ESTONIA

[signature]
L. LENTSMAN

TO THE CC CPSU

[*handwritten over the first two paragraphs*: “[one word illegible] for Khrushchev”]

Implementation of the CC CPSU decree “Measures to Vigorously Counteract Hostile Radio Propaganda”

The CC CPSU Decree of 19 July 1960 “Measures to Counteract Hostile Radio Propaganda” envisioned organizing the rebroadcast by radio from Moscow of varied current information about events in the country and abroad as well as other programs for radio listeners in the Eastern regions of the USSR when Voice of America and BBC are broadcasting special programs in Russian for the population of the Soviet Union.

Simultaneously it was recommended that the CC’s of the Communist Parties of the union republics organize serious, interesting political programs on republican broadcasts in the languages in which the hostile radio propaganda is being broadcast when the Voice of America and BBC are broadcasting.

The radio broadcast programs envisioned by the CC CPSU decree have begun. Beginning on 1 August 1960 the State Committee for Radio and Television Broadcasting has been transmitting special broadcasts for the Eastern regions of the Soviet Union every day from 1700 to 2200 Moscow time. The *Latest News*, commentary, and reviews are broadcast every hour during Voice of America and BBC programs in Russian. On [6] October 1960 the same programs from Moscow were introduced during the morning schedules of the Voice of America and BBC.

Thus the residents of Siberia and the Urals now have the opportunity at convenient morning and evening hours to listen to a variety of radio information and commentary from Moscow about the latest events in the world. These programs are rebroadcast on eight different shortwave frequencies and also a number of local and medium-wave radio stations.

At the present time the State Committee for Radio and Television Broadcasting and the USSR Ministry of Communications are taking steps so that programs with political information for the Eastern regions are also heard in the central part of the USSR during the scheduled programming of hostile radio propaganda.

The CC's of the Communist Parties of the union republics and a number of CPSU *oblast* committees have also examined the question of counteracting hostile radio propaganda and have taken specific steps to strengthen local radio broadcasting.

Beginning in September 1960 the Central Committee of the CP of Azerbaijan began republican radio broadcasting of additional editions of the *Latest News* during Voice of America and BBC programs, increased broadcasts of counterpropaganda materials in Azerbaijani and Russian, and took steps to improve the content of artistic programming.

The Central Committee of the CP of Estonia has changed the schedule of republican broadcasting. Now during Voice of America programming they broadcast varied political programming which enjoy great popularity with the population.

Such measures have also been taken in other republics and also in a number of *krais* and *oblasts*.

At the present time steps are being taken to further increase the quality of radio transmissions in national and local broadcasting.

The CC CPSU Department of Agitation and Propaganda for the Union Republics has instituted constant monitoring of the organization of active countermeasures against hostile radio propaganda. In the first quarter of 1961 the Department intends to review the question of the or-

ganization of the struggle against hostile radio propaganda in the Lithuanian SSR.

Deputy Chief of the CC CPSU Department of Agitation and Propaganda
for Union Republics

[signature]
A. Romanov

Chief of a sector of the Department

[signature]
G. Kazakov

5 January 1961

Source: CPSU Central Committee Archives, TsKhSD reel 1.1005/17, Fond 89, Perechen' 46, Delo 14. Copy in Hoover Archives. Obtained by Anatol Shmelev. Translated by Gary Goldberg.

Document No. 48: 1963. Minutes of Presidium Meeting on Restricting Soviet Shortwave Receivers

A discussion among the top leadership of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the CPSU on the problem of limiting production shortwave radio sets that receive Western broadcasts. The argument is made that, if sets capable of receiving Western radio broadcasts are not produced, Soviet citizens will find ways of adapting non-shortwave radios to receive the broadcasts. The Soviet leaders seem to be under the misconception that the production of shortwave receivers in America was stopped so that Americans could not receive information from the USSR and that the Soviets should do likewise.

[Excerpt]

CC CPSU Presidium

Stenographic Record of a Meeting of the CC CPSU Presidium
25 April 1963

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV...I think that the fourth question is the reasonable proposal of Comrade Ilichev.

So, do we adopt it?

A. I. MIKOYAN. Approve the suggestion as stated here.

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV. But, comrades, I would think that Comrade Kalmykov would need to deal with this. But this is Gosplan, let's entrust Comrade Ustinov with examining it with Comrade Kalmykov and work on the question of producing radio receivers which would only receive our stations.

A. N. KOSYGIN. Not shortwave [stations].

B. N. PONOMAREV. Amateurs will quickly modify [them], even though theoretically it's difficult to do this.

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV. Not everyone modifies [radios].

L. F. ILICHEV. They will modify [them] just when shortwave ones are produced. We give them the opportunity ourselves.

L. I. BREZHNEV. We produced 9 million of them.

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV. Why was this done?

L. F. ILICHEV. There was a decision but it wasn't carried out. The main objection was from the Ministry of Trade: the consumer won't buy [radios] without shortwave [capability]; THEY understand, they don't take them and the market is glutted.

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV. But production needs to be reduced.

A. N. KOSYGIN. [If] there are no others, they'll accept [them].

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV. Let's look: maybe produce these, and replace those. Let's appeal to the population.

Ye. A. FURTSEVA. As the Americans have done.

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV. Replace [them]. Have Comrades Ustinov and Shelepin study this and, possibly then write to those people who are responsible for disrupting the fulfillment of a decision of the CC and the government. This needs to be thought out.

Right now the television network is being expanded. We need to build a broader network. People need to be busy. More sets need to be produced and possibly even such public television sets [need] to be built in population centers and in clubs in order to sell tickets to ensure a good broadcast.

We need not only to fight and prohibit, but [also] need to give food [for thought] and get people busy with reasonable food and then people won't do this.

[There is] a relay in cities through a network. I don't know if it's necessary to increase individual use of radios and [spend] less for loudspeakers.

A. N. KOSYGIN. They won't get anything in medium and long [waves].

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV. Comrade Kosygin, the issue of fighting bourgeois influence is a serious issue.

A. N. KOSYGIN. Of course.

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV. We haven't been dealing with this matter, but it is a serious issue. The Americans, they are dealing with it: they replaced radios which operate on shortwave.

A. A. GROMYKO. They haven't replaced the radios, but have changed production.

L. F. ILICHEV. The process here is simple: they prohibited the manufacture of parts. There were no spare parts for what they'd produced, and they had no alternative and they began to buy this. That's what we need to do.

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV. This is the “free world.” They understand how they need to fight the Communist onslaught. But we Communists are daydreamers, we don’t understand, we need only a policeman. But they know: simply economically, they didn’t make spare parts, they broke down, so buy others. Let’s do it that way. In a word, we need to organize a more reasoned attack on the enemy and not give him an opportunity on our behalf, not make it easier for him to propagandize our country via radio.

M. A. SUSLOV. Don’t make ourselves easy targets.

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV. Some will listen; let them listen. I remember during the war there was Grechukha, there was nothing for him to do, so “he knew exactly what the Germans were saying [quote in Ukrainian],” in Ukrainian. So he perished at the radio. Everyone knew this was his weakness. What else? [Is that] everything? [*Note in original: the rest was not transcribed.*]

13. *Op. 16. D. 939. 1–126. Uncorrected verbatim record. Typed copy.*

Source: Prezidium TsK KPSS. 1954–1964. Chernovyye protokol’nye zapisi zasedaniy. Stenogrammy. Postanovleniya. T. 1 [The CC CPSU Presidium. 1954–1964. Rough transcripts of meetings. Verbatim records. Decrees. Vol. 1.] M[oscow]. ROSSPEN. 2003–2004, 702. Obtained by Vladimir Tolz. Translated by Gary Goldberg.

Document No. 49: 1965. Memo to CC CPSU from Turkmen
CC on Extending Turkmen Foreign Broadcasting

The Central Committee of the Turkmenistan Communist Party lobbies the Central Committee of the CPSU to establish a Farsi broadcasting service aimed at Iran and Afghanistan.

CPSU CC

16897

3 May 1965

CONTROL

To be returned to the CPSU CC

General Department

Communist Party of Turkmenistan
CENTRAL COMMITTEE

29 April 1965

No. 2-35

CPSU CC

Ideological Directorate

People in the southern regions of Turkmenistan bordering on Iran and Afghanistan have access to programs broadcast by the Iranian department of the Voice of America as well as Gorganskoye radio and Iranian radio broadcast in Turkmen language. These radio stations provide distorted descriptions of life in the Soviet Union, particularly in Soviet Eastern republics, extolling the bourgeois way of life.

More than 500,000 Turkmen people live in Iran and Afghanistan.

In connection with the development of international ties among peoples of the East, and the acute need to organize counterpropaganda on the radio for the Turkmen population residing in the territory of Iran and Afghanistan, it is now necessary to develop foreign broadcasts in Turkmen and Farsi.

Presently, the State Broadcast and Television Committee of the TSSR Council of Ministers has the capacity to conduct foreign broadcasts for at least one hour a day. In 1963–1964, two 50 kW radio transmitters “Sneg” [Snow] were added, and in April of this year a modernized long wave radio transmitter RV-19, VESO-10 type, 50 kW, will replace an outdated 20 kW transmitter.

Thus, two shortwave transmitters RV-770 and RV-148 achieve a range of coverage up to 3000 kilometers and a longwave transmitter RV-19 generates a signal up to 500 km and guarantees quality reception of Turkmen radio programs in the northern parts of Iran and Afghanistan, where Turkmen live. At the end of 1965, after the introduction of a new radio center with a powerful 150 kW transmitter “Iney” [Frost], the coverage of Turkmen radio programs increased even further.

The Radio committee requires an additional six employees to support a one-hour foreign broadcast, including an editor, a translator, and an announcer who speaks fluent Farsi.

The Academy of Sciences of TRRS and other institutions in the republic employ tens of comrades who have an impeccable knowledge of Farsi, and many of them wish to work for the radio. Therefore, finding the right staff for foreign broadcasts is not a problem.

This matter has been agreed upon with the State Broadcast and Television Committee of the USSR Council of Ministers.

Taking into account all of the above, the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Turkmenistan has found it reasonable to ask CPSU CC during a performance assessment of the State Broadcast and Television Committee of the TSSR Council of Ministers for permission to establish a foreign broadcast service in TSSR.

SECRETARY OF THE TURKMENISTAN CP CC

[signed] Y. KHUDANBERDYEV

2-shl

Source: Archives of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Obtained by Michael Nelson. Translated by Volodymyr Valkov.

Document No. 50: 1971. Report by KGB Chairman
Andropov on RFE and RL

A report from KGB Chairman Andropov to the Central Committee of the CPSU assessing the status of Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe in their "transition" period and measures that might be taken to weaken them. It alleges that RFE and RL are planning subversive actions against the USSR at the Munich Olympics. It credits the Soviet bloc intelligence services with increasing the problems of the Radios. The document indicates timely KGB knowledge of internal RL documents such as the March 15, 1971 revision of the Radio Liberty Policy Manual.

Top Secret

USSR
Committee for State Security
Council of Ministers

29 October 1971
No. 2739-A
Moscow

CPSU CC
29 October 1971
37510
To be returned to CPSU CC
General Department
300 A/3

CC CPSU

The Committee for State Security in cooperation with the security services of the People's Republic of Poland and the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic has carried out a number of measures to expose radio stations Liberty and Free Europe as centers of ideological subversion, whose activities against the USSR and other socialist countries are funded and directed by the Central Intelligence Agency of the USA.

The measures undertaken have disoriented, to a certain degree, the activities of these radio stations and created an uncertain and nervous en-

vironment among their employees. According to the data available, the US government is delaying the confirmation of a financial estimate for Free Europe and Liberty and is financing them temporarily through the United States Information Agency (USIA).

The Central Intelligence Agency of the United States is implementing measures to cover up its involvement with the radio stations. It has already been decided, for example, to assign staff within the "Committee of Radio Liberty" to a special projects unit that will from now on operate under the title of "Bedford Publications" conducting espionage against the USSR.

At the same time, the CIA and the management of the radio station Free Europe and Liberty are adopting measures to enhance the activities of editorial boards and other departments of [the] radio stations, and to facilitate the use of more flexible and sophisticated types and methods of ideological subversion.

In May 1971, new directives on the preparation of political programs were sent to radio station Liberty by the editorial board and the president of Radio Liberty. Underlining that radio station Liberty must remain the "voice" of emigrants from the Soviet Union and the "trumpet" of all discontented elements in the USSR, the new directive calls on the radio station to assist discontented elements in their "desire to be free from the dictatorial regime," to disseminate their "seditious" views, and to be in charge of their activities.

Radio station Free Europe has developed a plan of propagandist actions that focuses on programs designed to undermine trust among socialist countries. In particular, the plan provides for a series of public speeches on major aspects of the expansion of the socialist community with intent to discredit the main principles of socialism in the eyes of the working class.

The central theme of these programs, as intended by the adversary [memorandum], is to compromise the governmental apparatus, security services and the office of the public prosecutor, setting them off against one another as "separate groups of senior government officials and specific employees of the government." In order to make the programs of Free Europe seem trustworthy, they will be structured to show that evidence obtained against certain individuals comes from the radio station's agents affiliated with government offices in socialist countries.

The Committee for State Security also received information that radio stations Free Europe and Liberty intend to use the upcoming Olympic

Games in 1972 in Munich as a backdrop for conducting subversive activities against Soviet athletes and tourists. For these purposes, radio station Liberty launched special courses to train emigrants and deserters in how to make contact with the Soviet citizens, gain information from them, and talk them into not returning to the USSR.

The Committee for State Security continues to implement measures aimed at revealing the truth about the espionage and subversive activities of the afore-mentioned centers to the Soviet and international community.

CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE FOR STATE SECURITY

[signed] ANDROPOV

Source: Archives of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Obtained by Michael Nelson. Translated by Volodymyr Valkov.

Document No. 51: 1986. Memo to Central Committee
from Politburo Members Ligachev and Chebrikov on
Jamming of Western Radio Stations

This memorandum from Politburo members Chebrikov and Ligachev describes in general terms the jamming situation in 1986 and the rationale for ending jamming on VOA, BBC, Radio Peking and Radio Korea, while continuing jamming of Radio Liberty, Radio Free Europe, Deutsche Welle and Kol Israel.

[Excerpt]

Memorandum to the CC CPSU of Ye. Ligachev and V. Chebrikov, 25 September 1986

At the present time jamming of eight foreign radio stations is being carried out: Voice of America, BBC, Radio Liberty, [Radio] Free Europe, Deutsche Welle, Kol Israel [Voice of Israel], Radio Peking, and Radio Korea.

Thirteen long-range protection and 81 local protection radio centers are used, with a total power of about 40,000 kilowatts.

Long-range protection is done by jamming broadcasts on about 30% of the territory of the Soviet Union. Local protection is organized in 81 cities and enables the suppression of broadcasts in a zone with a radius of up to 30 km. Beyond this zone the quality of jamming falls off sharply. The long-range and short-range protection equipment covers regions of the country in which about 100–130 million people live with varying effectiveness.

As practical operating experience shows, at the technical level it is difficult to accomplish the task of providing high-quality jamming over the entire territory of the USSR and it requires considerable material resources.

The broadcasts of the non-governmental radio stations Radio Liberty and [Radio] Free Europe, as well as Deutsche Welle and Kol Israel, have an openly anti-Soviet character and abound with malicious slander of Soviet reality.

As a rule, the radio stations Voice of America and BBC deliver their materials tendentiously, from anti-Soviet perspectives, trying in the process to adhere to an impartial approach to describing the events and facts of international life, politics, economics, and culture.

The propaganda materials of Radio Peking and Radio Korea are unfriendly toward the USSR but not very convincing, and their delivery is done in a biased manner and primitively. [...]

...it seems advisable to halt the jamming of the government radio stations Voice of America and BBC, and also the radio stations Radio Peking and Radio Korea.

The technical resources freed up in the process are to be used for higher-quality and reliable jamming of Radio Liberty, [Radio] Free Europe, Deutsche Welle, and Kol Israel radio stations. [...]

Source: Archives of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Per. 18. D. 105. 1–2, as published in “Novoe Vremya,” no. 50, 1998. Obtained by Vladimir Tolz. Translated by Gary Goldberg.

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Glossary

AAN	Polish State Archives of Modern Records
ACNSAS	National Council for the Study of the Securitate Archive (Romania)
AIPN	Archive of the Institute of National Remembrance (Poland)
AMVR	Archive of the Ministry of the Interior (Bulgaria)
BBC	British Broadcasting Cooperation
BIB	Board for International Broadcasting (US)
BTA	Bulgarian Telegraph Agency
CC	Central Committee
CDA	Central State Archive (Bulgaria)
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
CSSR	Czechoslovak Socialist Republic
DEI	Division of External Information (Romania)
DLF	Deutschlandfunk
DW	Deutsche Welle
EEAOR	East European Audience and Opinion Research (RFE/RL)
ERAF	State Archives of Estonia
FEC	Free Europe Committee (US)
FEP	Free Europe Press (US)
GARF	State Archive of the Russian Federation
GDR	German Democratic Republic
HPR	Hungarian People's Republic
HSWP	Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party

IPN	Institute for National Remembrance (Poland)
ITU	International Telecommunications Union
KDS	Bulgarian Committee for State Security
KGB	Committee for State Security (USSR)
KISZ	Hungarian Communist Youth Organization
KOR	Committee for the Defense of the Workers (Poland)
KPP	Communist Party of Poland
LCRTB	Latvian Committee for Radio and Television Broadcasting
MBP	Ministry of Public Security (Poland)
MfS	Ministry of State Security (GDR)
MOL	Hungarian National Archives
MPA	Main Political Administration (Polish Army)
MSW	Ministry of Internal Affairs (Poland)
MTI	Hungarian News Agency
NCFE	National Committee for Free Europe (US)
OBOP	Center for Public Opinion Research (Poland)
OWI	Office of War Information (US)
OZP	Special closed letters (of TASS)
PGU-DS	First Main Directorate (of Bulgarian State Security)
PGU-KGB	First Chief Directorate of Committee for State Security (USSR)
PRB	People's Republic of Bulgaria
PRL	Polish People's Republic
PPR	Polish Workers' Party
PRR	People's Republic of Romania
PUWP	Polish United Workers' Party
RGANI	Russian State Archive of Contemporary History
RGASPI	Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History
RIAS	Radio In the American Sector (of Berlin)
SAAOR	Soviet Area Audience and Opinion Research (RFE/RL)
SIE	Foreign Intelligence Service (Romania)
SRI	Domestic Security Service (Romania)

TASS	Soviet news agency
TsDAHOU	Central State Archive of Public Organizations of Ukraine
USIA	United States Information Agency
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
VOA	Voice of America
VGU	Second Main Directorate (of Bulgarian State Security)
WAP	Military Political Academy (Poland)
WUBP	Voivodship Office of Public Security (Poland)

Index

NOTES ARE INDICATED BY N FOLLOWING THE PAGE NUMBER.

A

active resistance, 336
active users of media, 107
Adzhubei, A., 291ⁿ36
Afghanistan war (1979–1989), 38,
88–93, 346
age of Western broadcast audience,
80–81, 109–10, 111, 135–36
Agitation and Propaganda
Department (Hungary), 249,
250, 252
Agitation and Propaganda
Department (USSR), 309
agitprop meetings, 90, 90ⁿ24, 93
Aksyonov, Vasily, 23, 25, 26
Albania, RFE broadcasts to, 12
Albert, John, 31
Alexeyeva, Ludmilla, 23, 48
Aliiev, Geidar, 278
Allen, George V., 31, 32
“allied nationals,” 9
Amalrik, Andrei, 23
Anachkov, Georgi, 271ⁿ51
Anderson, Burnett, 34
Andropov, Yuri, 269, 270, 557–59
anti-jamming devices, 55–57, 326,
336, 338
anti-Semitism, 23–24, 279, 279ⁿ6
Antonescu, Ion, 220
Apollo lunar landing, 27, 35–36
APOR (Department of Audience
and Public Opinion Research).
See now East European

Audience and Opinion Research (EEAOR)

Arab terrorists, 221
Artemov, V. L., 104
Astra, Gunars, 332
Attali, Jacques, 243
*Attention! Anti-Communism On-
Air* (Jerans), 329
attitudinal type of broadcast
audiences, 82–84, 82ⁿ18
audience to Western broadcasts:
annual reach data, 76–79;
by attitudinal type, 82–84;
demographics of, 79–82,
109–14, 134–36; foreign
radio impact on, 116; Internet
impact on, 116; motivations
for listening, 85–86; and
programming choices, 86–88;
Soviet research methodology,
105–09; weekly reach
measurements, 72–73, 115,
142–44; Western research
methods, 10, 70–72, 334–35.
See also specific countries
August 1914 (Solzhenitsyn), 42

B

Baev, Jordan, 259
Balagush, Taraslav, 28
balloon operations, 14–15, 14ⁿ12,
149, 349

- Baltic States: audience reach
in, 75, 76; listening patterns
in, 114; Western broadcast
audience in, 288, 307
banned literary works, 22,
103
Barev, Tzenko, 268*n*42
Barlett, F. K., 104, 106
Bashev, Ivan, 266
Bashkirova, Elena I., 103
Batchan, Alex, 39, 47
Bauer, Ray, 19
Bay of Pigs, 33–34
BBC. *See* British Broadcasting
Service
behaviorist model, 106
Belinkov, Arkady, 23
Belorussia, Western broadcast
audience in, 75, 76, 288
Benton, William, 29, 298
Berecz, János, 346
Berelson, B., 104
Beria, Lavrenty, 278, 281, 284,
293, 293*n*43
Berkman, Paul L., 241
Berman, Jakub, 172, 251
Bernard, Noel, 206, 210, 213,
216–17, 223*n*19
Berzins, Andris, 339
BIB. *See* Board for International
Broadcasting
Bierut, Bolesław, 172
Birkavs, Valdis, 339
Bitterman, Mary G. F., 38
“Black Book” program, 251
BNF (Bulgarian National Front),
268*n*42
Board for International
Broadcasting (BIB), 23, 194–
95, 230, 267, 349–50
Bobkov, Fillip, 263, 450–52
BOD (Bulgarian Liberation
Organization), 268*n*42
bombing of RFE headquarters,
222, 462–66
Bone, N., 104
Bonner, Elena, 24
border issues, 300, 313
Botswana, transmission stations
in, 33
Boyarinov, V. I., 294–95
Brezhnev, Leonid, 313
Brikse, Inta, 339
British Broadcasting Service
(BBC): audience demographics,
84, 134, 135; audience reach
of, 70, 71, 72–73; in Bulgaria,
259, 262, 272; on Chernobyl
disaster, 97; funding of, 349; in
Hungary, 246; jamming of, 53,
309; in Poland, 131, 132, 170;
religious programming, 312;
in Romania, 206, 207, 208;
transmitters, 57; in Ukraine,
304; in USSR, 103
broadcast policy: and CIA, 7*n*2;
coordination of, 26; at Radio
Liberty, 24; at RFE, 3–16
Brown, A. C., 104
Brown, J. F., 231
Bruvers, Pavils, 320, 331, 332, 337
Brzezinski, Zbigniew, 265, 271, 329
BTA (Bulgarian Telegraph
Agency), 261
Bulganin, Nikolai, 278, 284,
285*n*21
Bulgaria: audience research in,
122, 142–44; jamming by, 27;
regime perceptions of Western
broadcasts, 357–65; regime
responses to RFE in, 259–74,
447–55, 467–75
Bulgarian Liberation Organization
(BOD), 268*n*42
Bulgarian National Front (BNF),
268*n*42
Bulgarian Telegraph Agency
(BTA), 261
Bureau of Applied Social Research
at Columbia University, 241
Bush, George H. W., 47
- ## C
- Cage, John, 244
Campaign of Truth, 30–31

- Camus, Albert, 20
 Caribbean, transmission stations
 in, 33
 Carlos the Jackal, 215, 215–16ⁿ¹²,
 221–25, 462–66
 Carter, Jimmy, 213
 Castro, Fidel, 32
 Catholic Church: in Lithuania, 22;
 and RFE in Poland, 160, 166; in
 Slovakia, 314, 315
 Ceaușescu, Nicolae: and jamming
 of RFE, 209; and RFE, 212–13,
 226; and Romanian-sponsored
 terrorism, 214
 censorship: of mail, 210; in
 Poland, 151, 177–78; and RFE
 in Poland, 154; in Romania,
 229–38
 Center for Democracy, 47
 Center for Public Opinion
 Research in Warsaw (OBOP,
 Poland), 121–22, 124–28, 134–
 36, 155, 183
 Center for the Study of Propaganda
 (Poland), 155
 Central Asia, audience reach in, 75
 Central Intelligence Agency (CIA):
 broadcasting goals of, 7; and
 broadcasting policy, 7ⁿ²; and
 journalistic independence,
 350; and nuclear testing, 21;
 and Radio Liberty, 19; RFE as
 intelligence source for, 10ⁿ⁸;
 RFE funding from, 9, 165, 194,
 349; and Światło broadcasts,
 11ⁿ⁹
 Chalupnik, Kazimierz, 185ⁿ⁵⁴
 channel effectiveness, 59–62, 59ⁿ⁷
 Chernobyl disaster, 42, 95–97, 345
 Chernyaev, Anatoly, 28
 Chids, G. L., 104
 China Radio International, 53
 Chiriac, Cornel, 216
 “Chronicle of Current Events,” 22
 CIA. *See* Central Intelligence
 Agency
 Cismarescu, Mihai, 218
 civil rights movement in U.S., 27
 Clarkson, Natalie, 46, 47
 Clepper, G., 104
 Cohn, Roy M., 31
 collective listening to radio, 174
 collectivization, 302, 314
 Communications and Opinion
 Research (Sweden), 271
 communication theory, 243–44
 Communist Party: in Estonia, 307;
 in Hungary, 246–47, 249–50; in
 Poland, 147–68
 company wire-broadcasting
 centers, 174
 Comparative and Continuous
 Sampling, 122–23
 Congress of Cultural Freedom, 141
 Conkling, James, 40
 Conover, Willis, 28, 348
Conover on Jazz program, 28
 conservatives, 82–84
 Constantinescu, Emil, 205
 Coordinating Center of the Anti-
 Bolshevist Struggle, 18
 Coordination Board for
 Propaganda Abroad (Bulgaria),
 261
 Cornea, Doina, 225
 correspondence control: in
 Lithuania, 306; in Poland, 185,
 504–05; in Romania, 210, 235–
 36; in USSR, 288
 corruption, 37, 149, 159
 Corwin, Julie, 277
 Council for Ideological Work
 (Bulgaria), 261
 counter-informative processing,
 236
 counterintelligence, 260–61
 counter-jamming, 55–57, 336
 Counter-Letters, 179
 counter-propaganda: in Bulgaria,
 261, 467–68; in Hungary,
 249–50; in Latvia, 328–31; in
 Poland, 152; in USSR, 104, 298
 credibility: in Korean Airliner
 incident, 93–95; in Poland,
 136–40, 167, 168; in Romania,
 207, 230; and Soviet jamming,

328; in USSR, 108–09, 113, 118; of VOA, 38; of Western broadcasts, 348–49
 Critchlow, James, 23
 cross reporting, 26
 Crusade for Freedom, 7, 8*n*3, 9, 349
 Cuba: and Bay of Pigs, 33–34; Castro's rise to power, 32; at ideological subversion seminar, 199; jamming by, 52
 Cuban missile crisis, 33, 34
 Cummins, Barbara, 47, 48
 Curry, Jane Leftwich, 147
 customs officers, 235
 Czechoslovakia: audience research in, 122, 142–44; balloon operations in, 14; broadcasts to, 5; Bulgarian intelligence collaboration with, 265, 453–55; crisis (1968), 159, 299–317; at ideological subversion seminar, 199; jamming by, 171; radio availability in, 208; regime responses to RFE in, 10, 476–86; and VOA broadcasts, 43
 Czechowicz, Andrzej, 158, 162, 190–94, 203

D

Daniel, Yuli, 22
 Davison, P., 104
 Deksenieks, Imants, 321
 democracy: in Hungary, 257; in Latvia, 341; and Western broadcasts, 345–50
 demographics of Western broadcast audiences: in Poland, 134–36; for Radio Liberty, 71; in USSR, 79–82, 117; for VOA, 71
 Department of Audience and Public Opinion Research (APOR). *See now* East European Audience and Opinion Research (EEAOR)

de-Stalinization, 283
 détente: and Polish regime responses to RFE, 198–201; U.S.–Soviet, 36
 Deutsche Welle: audience demographics, 84; audience reach of, 71, 72–73; in Hungary, 246; jamming of, 53; in Romania, 206, 208; transmitters, 57; in USSR, 103
 DIE (Division of External Information, Romania), 230, 237
 Dilas, Milovan, 26, 37
 Dimitrov, Georgi, 267
Diplomat (Thayer), 29
 disinformation campaigns: in Poland, 162–63, 184, 186, 196–97; in Romania, 211, 224, 237
 dissident groups: in Bulgaria, 259, 273; in Latvia, 324; in Poland, 160, 166; and RFE, 161–62; in Romania, 211; in Soviet Western frontier, 312; in USSR, 297
 Division of External Information (DIE, Romania), 230, 237
 Dochev, Ivan, 268*n*42
Doctor Zhivago (Pasternak), 22
Domestic Bloc program, 210, 223, 226
 domestic media and press: on Chernobyl disaster, 96; credibility of, 113, 136–40; criticisms of Western broadcasts, 98, 163; in Hungary, 247; improvements in, 99, 118; in Latvia, 324; local radio rebroadcasts of VOA programs, 27; in Poland, 151; regime responses to RFE published in, 10; television, 310; in USSR, 98–99, 104, 115; VOA use of, 46
 Doob, L., 104
 Dovlatov, Sergei, 23
 dual language newscasts, 41
 Dubček, Alexander, 45

Dywiersja (Kolczyński), 186

E

Eagleburger, Lawrence, 37
East European Audience and
Opinion Research (EEAOR),
122–23, 128–29, 134–36, 142–
44, 207
Edelman, O., 291–92
education level of listeners: in
Poland, 135; in USSR, 74,
79–80, 81–82, 110, 111
Ekecz, Géza, 348
embassies in target countries, 7,
14–15
emigrant interviews, 68, 69
“enemy emigration,” 268–69
“enemy nationals,” 9
engineering personnel, 9
entertainment programs, 85, 112
Ermakov, G. I., 295
Estonia: foreign television viewing
in, 310; regime responses
to Western broadcasts in,
537–41; RFE and RL in, 335;
sovereignty of, 300–02, 303;
students in, 306, 310; Western
broadcast audience in, 305–06,
316
exiles: broadcasts by, 4–5, 7;
programming on lives of, 6; and
redefection campaign, 13–14;
status of, 9
ex officio surveillance, 234–35
extra channel interference, 55,
55*n*5

F

Fainsod, Merle, 19
FEC. *See* Free Europe Committee
Federal Communications
Commission (FCC, U.S.), 52
Federal Regulatory Commission
(FRC, U.S.), 52
Feigin, Leo, 28
Fejgin, Anatol, 175

FEP. *See* Free Europe Press
Ferguson, Glen, 270
Finnish TV, 310
Flam, Lucy, 47
“Fonda” (MSW agent), 187–90
Foreign Intelligence Service
(Bulgaria), 270
Foucault, Michel, 255
Frank, Victor Semyonovich, 19
Franzsoff, Victor, 29
FRC (Federal Regulatory
Commission, U.S.), 52
“Freda” (MSW agent), 191, 201
Free Europe Committee (FEC), 4,
7, 7*n*2, 8*n*3, 149
Free Europe Press (FEP), 4, 14, 15
Free Union of the Romanian
Working Class, 234–35, 235*n*8
frequency-modulated jamming, 64
Fulbright, J. William, 20, 194–95,
203

G

Galich, Aleksandr, 23
Gallup International (Great
Britain), 271
Garthoff, Raymond, 262
Gawlikowski, Lechoslaw, 121
GDR. *See* German Democratic
Republic
gender differences in Western
broadcast audience, 72, 74,
79–80, 110–11, 135
Georgescu, Emil, 223–25, 223*n*19
Georgescu, Iulian, 208
Georgescu, Vlad, 218–21, 223*n*19
Georgia, pro-Stalin demonstrations
in, 302
Germanauskas, Jonas, 303
German Democratic Republic
(GDR), regime perceptions of
Western broadcasts, 366–67
Germany. *See* German Democratic
Republic (GDR); West
Germany
Gheorghiu-Dej, Gheorghe, 211–12
Gierek, Edward, 129, 151, 506–08

glasnost: and Afghanistan war, 92;
and censorship, 87; and VOA,
39–45
Glenny, Misha, 43
Gode, G., 104
Gogolyák, Gusztáv, 244
Golubev, Sergei, 269, 270
Goma, Paul, 221, 222, 232ⁿ⁴, 234
Gombrich, E. H., 239
Gomułka, Władysław: arrest of,
174; and regime responses
to RFE, 176–92; and RFE
audience, 128; and RFE
transcripts, 150–51; and
Światło broadcasts, 11ⁿ⁹
Gorbachev, Mikhail: and
Afghanistan war, 93; on impact
of Western broadcasts, 39;
jamming ended by, 24; and
“kindness to the fallen,” 293;
on Soviet reactions to Western
broadcasts, 278; use of Western
broadcasts, 47
Greece, transmission stations in,
33
Greek Catholic Church, 314, 315
Gromyko, A. A., 285ⁿ²¹
Grósz, Károly, 250
Group D antenna, 65
Guillino, Francesco, 268ⁿ⁴¹
Gulag Archipelago (Solzhenitsyn),
36, 42
Gurevich, P. S., 104
Guzik, Leszek, 199
gypsy music, 251

H

Harden, Blaine, 44
hardliners, 82–84
Harriman, Kathleen, 29
Havel, Václav, 26, 346
Hayward, Max, 20
Heil, Alan L., Jr., 25
Helloran, D., 104
“Helmut” (Romanian agent), 224
Henze, Paul B., 3
Herzen, Aleksandr, 17

Hilbert, R., 104
Holland case, 178, 178ⁿ³³
Hopkins, Mark, 37, 47
Hovlaid, K., 104
human rights issues: in Bulgaria,
264, 265, 357; in Latvia, 324–
25, 335–36; RFE promotion
of, 177, 273; in Romania, 210,
213, 230, 231, 232ⁿ⁴, 234; in
USSR, 22–23, 88, 451
Hungarian News Agency, 246,
248, 304
Hungarian Revolution (1956), 15,
32, 299–317
Hungary: audience research in,
122, 142–44; balloon operations
in, 14; exiles employed by RFE,
8; at ideological subversion
seminar, 199; jamming by,
171; radio availability in, 208;
regime perceptions of Western
broadcasts, 368–90; regime
responses to RFE, 10, 249–57,
487–500; RFE impact in, 11,
16, 239–57
Huntington, Samuel, 329
Hurezeanu, Emil, 226
Husák, Gustáv, 43

I

Ierunca, Virgil, 221
Ignatov, Asen, 259
Iliescu, Ion, 222–23
Ilnitsky, Yuri, 313, 314
Ilychev, Leonid, 285, 286–87, 297
Imaginary Landscape No. 4
(Cage), 244
Ingure, D., 104
Inkeles, Alex, 19
Inkyov, Dimiter, 259, 267, 269
Institute for National
Remembrance (Poland), 124,
191
Institute for the Study of
Contemporary Problems of
Capitalism, 155, 186
Institute of Cultural Relations, 249

Institute of Sociology at Russian Academy of Sciences, 78, 103, 105

Institute of Western Affairs, 155

Institut für Markt-und-Sozialforschung (West Germany), 271

intelligence operations: by Bulgaria, 261–65, 450–55; CIA and RFE collaboration, 10n8; by Poland, 161–63, 182, 187–90; RFE transcripts as source for, 150; Warsaw Pact collaborations, 261–62, 263, 269–70, 441–46, 453–55.

See also specific intelligence organizations and agents

intelligentsia: in Bulgaria, 273; in Lithuania, 306; in Poland, 153; in Romania, 233; and Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, 22–23; in USSR, 111

intensity of contacts, 107

interest level, 107

InterMedia Research Institute, 79n16

International Telecommunications Union (ITU), 60

Internet, 116, 118

Interpress, 154, 165

INTORA (Austria), 271

Ionescu, Eugene, 26

ionospheric jamming, 57–59, 328

Iran hostage crisis, 38

irredentist activities, 233, 303–04

irregular users of media, 107, 111

Iuga, Dumitru, 235n8

“Ivan” (KDS agent), 263

“Ivanovski” (KDS informant), 273n55

Izvestia on *glasnost*, 46

J

Jakeš, Miloš, 43

Jakobson, Helen, 29

jamming, 51–66; in Bulgaria, 262; and channel effectiveness,

59–62; costs of, 346; counter-jamming technology, 55–57, 336; defined, 52; in Estonia, 301; as evidence of RFE impact, 9–10; history of, 52–55; in Hungary, 244; in Latvia, 326–28; local vs. distant, 57–59; in Poland, 149, 161, 170–74, 176, 203; and program effectiveness, 59–62; selective, 309; of VOA broadcasts, 27, 36

Janowski, Krzysztof (Kris), 44, 47

Japan, transmission stations in, 33

Jaruzelski, Wojciech, 147n1, 152, 152n4, 157

Jautajumi un Atbildes journal on Western broadcasting, 331

Jazz America program, 28

Jegliński, Anatol, 173

Jerans, Peteris, 328–29, 330

Jews, 22, 23–24, 279, 279n6

Johnson, A. Ross, 345

journalists: independence of, 350; and Radio Liberty, 20; at RFE, 10; and RFE in Poland, 154; Romanian, 206; and VOA, 33

Jurkans, Janis, 339

K

Kádár, János, 245, 249

Kadikis, R. T., 333

Kaganovich, Lazar, 293

Kąkol, Kazimierz, 163

Kalchev, Nikolai, 273n55

Kalugin, Oleg, 268, 269, 270, 278

Kaminskaya, Dina, 23

Kania, Stanisław, 147n1, 151, 152, 152n4

Karevyae, R., 104

Karpovich, Yaroslav, 278

Kassner, Johann, 196

Katyn Massacre, 157

Katz, D., 104

KDS. *See* State Security Committee (Bulgaria)

Kelly, G., 104

Kelner, Irene, 42–43

Keogh, James, 36, 42
 Kersten Committee, 9, 9n6
 KGB: broadcast summaries
 prepared by, 321; Bulgarian
 collaboration with, 263, 267,
 269–70, 273n55, 450–52;
 jamming role of, 327; mail
 intercepts by, 288, 306;
 operations against RFE, 261,
 456–61; Western broadcast
 audience research by, 287
 Khanzhenkov, S. N., 296
 Khmara, G. I., 104
 Khrushchev, Nikita: image
 impact of broadcasts, 293–94;
 kompromat on, 284–85; and
 nuclear testing, 21; review of
 Western broadcast materials,
 278, 281, 284, 285n21; secret
 speech, 11, 22, 150, 165, 294,
 301; and Western broadcasts,
 286, 307–08; and Yugoslavia,
 12
 King, Martin Luther, Jr., 35
 Kirk, Roger, 207
 Kirsteins, Aleksandrs, 339
 Kiszczak, Czesław, 147n1, 160,
 160n18, 162, 265
 Kleckins, Abrams, 328, 340
 Kliszko, Zenon, 158
 Kohler, Foy, 29, 30
 Kolczyński, Janusz, 185
 Kol Israel, 53, 57
Kolokol (Herzen), 17
 Komarovsky, V. S., 104, 105
Kommunist journal on impact of
 Western broadcasts, 98–99
kompromat, 284–85
 “Konrad” (Romanian agent), 224
 Kopelev, Lev, 23
 Korean Airliner incident, 93–95,
 345
 “Kostja” (Latvian agent), 321
 Kostov, Traicho, 301
 Kostov, Vladimir, 259, 265, 266,
 267
 Kotzev, Vasil, 269, 270, 272
 Kovachev, Nikifor, 273n55

Kovács, László, 257
 Kracauer, Siegfried, 241, 251
 Kreis, Jüri, 306
 Kruszewski, Stanisław, 150
Kultura journal and Polish elite,
 154, 186
 “Kumor” (MSW agent). *See* Lach,
 Mieczysław
 Kuznetsov, Anatoli, 23
 Kyulyumov, Kostadin, 265

L

Lach, Mieczysław, 191–92, 193,
 200
 Landau, L. D., 295
 Lange, Oskar, 181
 Langendorf, Ernst, 13n11
 Lasswell, H., 106
 Latvia: foreign television viewing
 in, 310; jamming in, 326–28;
 regime responses to Western
 broadcasts in, 320–34, 537–41,
 545–46; repression of listeners
 in, 332–34; Soviet counter-
 propaganda in, 328–31;
 Western broadcasting impact in,
 319–42
 Latvian Committee for Radio
 and Television Broadcasting
 (LCRTB), 321–23
 Lazarsfeld, P., 104
 Lebanon, U.S. Marines in, 32
Le Monde coverage of Vietnam
 War, 34
 Lentsmann, Leonid, 301
Letter of the 34, 179
 “Letter of the Six,” 225, 226
 Levin, S. F., 296
 Libby, Willard, 21
 liberals, 82–84, 100
 Liberia, transmission stations in,
 33
 library usage in Romania, 232
 Linebarger, P. N., 104
 Lipien, Ted, 41
 listener mail: intercepted, 504–05;
 for music and entertainment

programs, 85; from Romania, 210; from USSR, 295–96
 listener satisfaction, 208
 literary works, banned, 22. *See also specific works*
 Lithuania: Catholic minority in, 22; free debate in, 45–46; RFE and RL in, 335; students in, 302, 303; Western broadcast audience in, 302–03
 Lobachev, F. N., 289
 local jamming, 57–59
 local media. *See* domestic media and press
 Loga-Sowiński, Ignacy, 158
 long wave broadcasts, 27, 33
 Loomis, Henry, 21, 32, 33, 34, 35
 Lovinescu, Monica, 221
 Löwenthal, Leo, 240
 lunar landing, 27, 35–36
 Lyubimov, Yuri, 26, 42

M

Machcewicz, Paweł, 169
 Maciszewski, Jarema, 155
magnitizdat, 348
 Măgureanu, Virgil, 222
 Magyar, Mikhail, 314–15
 mail. *See* correspondence control
 Makowicz, Adam, 28
 Malenkov, Georgy, 278, 279, 281, 284, 285*n*21, 293
 Malishev, N. A., 333
 Manolescu, Nicolae, 25, 44–45
Man Without a Face (Wolf), 346
 Markov, Georgi: death of, 215, 267–68, 269–70; defection of, 259, 266, 266*n*31; RFE work of, 259, 265
 martial law in Poland, 159
 Martin, Ed, 33
 Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) computer simulation model, 68–69
 Mass Media Department of the Research Institute of Sociology, 105

Matlin, Vladimir, 47–48
 Matwin, Władysław, 161
 Maximov, Vladimir, 23
 McCarthy hearings, 30–31
 McGrory, Mary, 35
 McLuhan, Marshall, 240
 media. *See* domestic media and press
 Media and Opinion Research Reports, 79*n*16
 medium wave broadcasts and jamming, 27, 33, 52*n*2, 326
 Middle East War (1967), 159
 Mid-European Studies Center, 4
 Mihajlov, Mihajlo, 26, 37
 Millikan, Max, 19
 Miłosz, Czesław, 26
 Ministry of Internal Affairs (MSW, Poland), 184–87
 Ministry of Transportation and Communications (Bulgaria), 261
 minority issues: in Hungary, 247; and Radio Liberty, 22; and RFE, 8*n*5; in Romania, 233; in Soviet Western frontier, 305, 308; in Ukraine, 304
 misinformation. *See* disinformation campaigns
 MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) computer simulation model, 68–69
 Mladenov, Petar, 262
 Moczar, Mieczysław, 166, 181
 moderates, 82–84, 100
 Moldavia, audience reach in, 75, 288
 Molotov, Vyacheslav, 281, 293
 monitoring: of dissident groups, 22; in Latvia, 320–26, 341; of Western broadcasts by Hungary, 246–47
 moon landing, 27, 35–36
 Moreno, Yvette Neisser, 121
 Moscow State University, 20
 “most like” research method, 241, 242
 motivations for listening, 85–86, 108, 112–13

MSW (Ministry of Internal Affairs, Poland), 184–87
 Muller, Herman, 21
 Munteanu, Neculai Constantin, 226
 Murrow, Edward R., 33–34
 music programs, 85; broadcast to USSR, 103; in Hungary, 251; in Lithuania, 303, 311; in Romania, 206, 237; in USSR, 112, 117–18
Music USA program, 28
Myth and Reality in German War-Time Broadcasts (Gombrich), 239

N

Naegele, Jolyon, 43, 44, 45
 Nagat, Germina, 229
 Nagy, Imre, 11
 Najder, Zdzisław, 202
 Naletaev, V. D., 288–89, 288n29
 Nastasiuk, G. I., 289–90
 National Committee for Free Europe (NCFE), 4
 National Salvation Front, 225, 225n23
 Nechiporenko, Oleg, 278
 Neilands, Nikolajs, 321
 Neizvestny, Ernst, 23
 Nekrasov, Viktor, 23
 Nelson, Michael, 39
 “New Economic Mechanism” (Hungary), 252–54, 256
News from Behind the Iron Curtain magazine, 4
New York Times coverage of Vietnam War, 35
 Nica, Sergiu, 216n12
 Nicolaides, Philip, 39–40
 noise vs. message, 243–45
Nove Zhyttia, nationalist opinions published in, 313
 Novikov, G. M., 294
 Nowak-Jeziorański, Jan: and disinformation campaigns, 186, 196–97; on information supply

from Poland, 180; intelligence operations against, 162; propaganda campaigns against, 201–02; RFE work of, 14, 15, 15n13
 nuclear testing, 21

O

OBOP. *See* Center for Public Opinion Research in Warsaw
 Office of Religious Affairs (Poland), 160
 Office of War Information (U.S.), 29, 54
 Official Bulletin of Foreign Information (USSR), 277
 Olympics boycott (1980), 38
 one-step communication model, 106
 Open Society Archives, 241–42
 opinion formation, 99–100, 345
 Orescu, Șerban, 222, 222n17
Ostpolitik, 194–95
 OZP (*osoby zakryte pisma*), 277–78, 279n3, 280, 285, 285n21

P

Pacepa, Ion Mihai, 209, 214, 217, 221, 223–24, 233n7
 Paczkowski, Andrzej, 172
Padomju Latvijas Komunistu journal on Western broadcasting, 331
 Panfilov, F. N., 290
 Parta, R. Eugene, 67, 345
 “partisan group” (Poland), 181
 passive resistance, 335, 337–38
 Pasternak, Boris, 22
 Pauling, Linus, 21
 pensioners in RFE audience, 233
perestroika, 87, 100
 Persak, Krzysztof, 178n33
 Petrokas, I. R., 288
 Philippines, transmission stations in, 33

Piętek, Henryk, 198
 Pipes, Richard, 19
 Plachkov, Blagoy, 270
 Pleikys, Rimantas, 64
 Plejkis, R., 277
 Pleșiță, Nicolae, 216n12
 Plucis, Guntars, 327
 Pobedonostsev, Konstantin, 23
 “poison umbrella” case, 267–68, 269–70
 Poland: audience to Western broadcasts in, 121–44; balloon operations in, 14–15; broadcasts to, 5; Bulgarian intelligence collaboration with, 265; Communist elites and RFE in, 147–68, 169–204; at ideological subversion seminar, 199; jamming by, 27; regime perceptions of Western broadcasts, 161–63, 394–408; regime responses to RFE in, 10, 169–204, 501–19. *See also* Solidarity
 “Polish October” (1956), 11n9, 15, 150
 Polish Press Agency (PAP), 154, 201
 Polish Writers’ Association, 179
 political analysis, 88
 political orientation of audiences, 82–84, 82n18
 political prisoners, 230, 232, 236, 236n9, 300
 Pomar, Mark, 42
 Portugal, transmitting base in, 5, 7, 169
 potential audience, 107
 Poznań workers’ demonstrations (1956), 32, 150, 175–76
Pravda on Korean Airliner incident, 93
 press. *See* domestic media and press
 Professional Code for RFE and RL, 24
 program effectiveness, 59–62, 59n7

programming: for Bulgaria, 265; diversity of, 348; jamming impact on, 59–62; repeated, 60; simulcasts, 59; for USSR, 112; at VOA, 30
 propaganda: and Afghanistan war, 89; and audience research, 106; in Hungary, 249; and jamming, 53n3; in Latvia, 328–31; in Poland, 184; in USSR, 290–93
 propagation frequencies, 62
 pseudo-random speech jamming, 64
 public loudspeakers, 239–40
Public Opinion Quarterly on public opinion research, 240
 public opinion research in Poland, 148, 152. *See also* Center for Public Opinion Research in Warsaw (OBOP)
 Pudels, R., 331
 Putin, Vladimir, 24

Q

“qualified judge” research method, 241, 242
 quota sampling, 123

R

Răceanu, Mircea, 207
 radioactive poisoning, 217
 Radio Ankara, 246
 Radio Beijing, 259
 radio bridges, 45
 Radio Budapest, 54
 Radio France Internationale, 206, 259
 Radio Free Asia, 51
 Radio Free Europe (RFE): audience surveys, 271–72; bombing of headquarters, 222, 462–66; broadcast policy evolution, 3–16; in Bulgaria, 259–74; in Hungary, 239–57; jamming of, 53, 132; in Latvia, 322–23, 325, 329; in Poland,

- 121–44, 147–204; policy coordination, 26; political impact of, 166–68; in Romania, 205–27; transmitters, 57; in USSR, 103; violence against Romanian Service broadcasters, 216–18
- Radio Korea, 53
- Radio Liberty (RL): audience research for, 70–73, 75, 84; on Chernobyl disaster, 97; goals of, 17–24; jamming of, 53; in Latvia, 329; policy coordination, 26; programming choices, 86–88; religious programming, 312; transmitters, 56, 57, 65; in USSR, 103
- Radio Luxembourg, 134, 135
- Radio Madrid, 170
- Radio Moscow, 54, 164
- Radio Netherlands, 53, 57
- Radio Paris, 170
- Radio Prague, 54
- Radio Russia, 46
- Radio Sweden, 319
- Radio Tirana, 164, 243, 259
- Radio Vatican: in Hungary, 243, 246; jamming of, 53; in Latvia, 319, 322–23, 325; religious programming, 312; in USSR, 103
- Radio Warsaw, 54
- Rajk, László, 301
- Rakowski, Mieczysław, 147n1, 163
- Ralis, Max, 68n4
- random noise signals, 64
- random speech jamming, 64
- Rapacki, Adam, 181
- Ratesh, Nestor, 205
- Reagan, Ronald, 38, 39–45
- real audience, 107
- Reddaway, Peter, 20
- redefection campaign, 13–14
- Red Horizons* (Pacepa), 214, 219–20, 221, 233n7
- refugee status, 9
- regime responses to Western broadcasts: in Bulgaria, 259–74, 447–55, 467–75; in Czechoslovakia, 10, 476–86; in Estonia, 537–41; in Hungary, 10, 249–57, 487–500; intelligence services collaboration, 441–46; in Latvia, 320–34, 537–41, 545–46; in Poland, 10, 161–63, 169–204, 501–19; in Romania, 211–27, 229–38; in USSR, 10, 277–98, 520–61
- regional listening patterns, 74–76, 114, 299–317
- regular users of media, 107, 111, 345
- Reiffel, Leonard, 21
- Reinhardt, John, 38
- religion: and émigrés from USSR, 23; freedom of, 18; in Latvia, 325; in Lithuania, 22; in Poland, 160, 166; programming for, 88, 311–12; and RL broadcasting, 22; in Slovakia, 314, 315; in Ukraine, 315
- Reportages in Absentia on Bulgaria* program, 266, 267
- repression of listeners: in Latvia, 332–34; in Poland, 174, 202, 203; in Romania, 212, 232–37
- research methodology: by Soviets, 105–09; by Western broadcasters, 70–72
- research operations, 10, 347
- Rév, István, 239
- RFE. *See* Radio Free Europe
- RL. *See* Radio Liberty
- Romania: audience research in, 122, 142–44; broadcasts to Soviet Romanians, 311; censorship in, 229–38; communication with RFE from, 210–11; exiles employed by RFE, 8; radio availability in, 208; regime perceptions of Western broadcasts, 391–93; regime responses to RFE

in, 211–27; RFE impact on, 205–27; and Soviet Moldovans, 308; and violence against RFE broadcasters, 216–18
Romania literara journal, 44–45
 ROMIR audience surveys, 79, 79*n*16, 116
 Ronalds, Francis (Ronny), 23
 Roosevelt, Eleanor, 21
 Rostow, Walt, 19
 Rostropovich, Mstislav, 23, 26, 42
 Rowan, Carl, 34
 Rozanova, Mariya, 23
 Róžański, Jacek, 175
 Rozkalns, Janis, 324, 336–37
 Rubenis, Ojars, 331, 339
Rudé Právo on socialist socio-economic order, 314
 rural listeners, 82
 Russian Orthodox Church, 315
 Rutks, Uldis, 326, 328, 338

S

SAAOR. *See* Soviet Area Audience and Opinion Research
 Sakadolskis, Romas, 45–46
 Sakharov, Andrei, 22, 26
samizdat (self-published) works, 22, 87, 348
 Sanchez, Ilich Ramirez. *See* Carlos the Jackal
 Sargeant, Howland, 19, 21
 saturation home-service broadcasting, 6, 347, 348
 Savchenko, Ivan, 270
 Savin, V. I., 295*n*51
 Schapiro, Leonard, 20
 Schine, G. David, 31
 Schmemann, Aleksandr, 19
 Schramm, Wilbur, 20, 104
 science and technology programming, 88
 Second Soviet Writers Congress, 20
 secret police: in Bulgaria, 260; in Czechoslovakia, 215; in Poland, 149, 165, 174–75; in Romania,

209, 229–38. *See also specific organizations*
 Select Committee on Communist Aggression, 9, 9*n*6
 self-published works. *See samizdat* works
 Semerdjiev, Petar, 265, 266, 267
 Serov, I. A., 295
 Shagin, Boris, 23
 Shelest, Petro, 313
 Shepilov, Dmitri, 293
 Shitov, N., 331
 shortwave: availability of receivers, 111–12; broadcasts, 55–56; jamming, 55, 55*n*5, 326, 328; VOA broadcasts, 27, 33
 Shub, Boris, 19
 Shulman, Marshall, 19
 Shultz, George, 43
 Siberian RSFSR, audience reach in, 75
 Šiklova, Jiřina, 43
 Simis, Konstantin, 23
 simulcasts, 59
 Singer, Isaac Bashevis, 21
 Sinyavsky, Andrei, 22, 23
 sky-wave jamming, 57–59, 243*n*11
 Slánský, Rudolf, 11, 301
 Slavov, Atanas, 259
 Smoliński, Andrzej, 200
 Sobolev, A. A., 172
 social factors of audience behavior, 105–06
Socialistiskais Internacionalisms un Patriotisms (Shitov), 331
 Social Research Institute of the Military Political Academy (WAP, Poland), 124, 129–32, 155
 SOFRES-Metra (France), 271
 Sokolova, V. I., 290
 Solakov, Angel, 272
 Solidarity, 38, 41, 43
 Solzhenitsyn, Aleksandr, 22, 26, 36, 39, 42
 Sorensen, Tom, 34
 Sorokin, Nik, 41, 48
 Sosin, Gene, 17
 sovereignty, 17, 300–02, 303

Soviet Area Audience and Opinion Research (SAAOR), 68–69, 85, 95, 142–44, 335–36
 Soviet Union. *See* Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR)
 Special Committee for Fighting against Corrupt Practices and Economic Sabotage (Poland), 174
 sports programs, 206
 Sputnik, 32
 spying. *See* intelligence operations
 Stalin, Joseph: death of, 11, 31; image management by, 280; review of Western broadcast materials, 278–79, 285*n*21
 Starewicz, Artur, 151
 State Department, U.S., 7, 20, 29, 252
 State Security Committee (KDS, Bulgaria): KGB collaboration with, 263, 267, 269–70, 273*n*55; and Markov, 268; and RFE, 260, 266
 Stinkuls, Alfreds, 332
 Stoyanov, Dimitar, 265, 269–70
 Stoyanov, Petar, 263, 267, 450–52
 students: in Estonia, 306, 310; in Lithuania, 302, 303; in Romania, 233; in USSR, 111
 Suez war (1956), 32
 Sulimov, V. P., 333
 sunspot cycle and jamming, 57, 58, 328
 surrogate broadcasting, 320, 347
 surveillance. *See* intelligence operations
 Swedish TV, 310
 Światło, Józef, 11, 11*n*9, 149, 165, 174–75
 swinging carrier jamming, 64
 Szaniawski, Józef, 202
 Szczepański, Maciej, 151
 Szlachcic, Franciszek, 180, 191, 193

T

Tajikistan, Western broadcast audience in, 309

take-off angle, 65
 “Target Area Listener Reports,” 299
 TASS Information reports, 277, 278, 279*n*3, 280
 Tatars, 22
 technical personnel, 9
 television. *See* domestic media and press
 Teller, Edward, 21
 terrorism, 214, 222, 268*n*42, 462–66
 Thatcher, Margaret, 39
 Thayer, Charles, 29–30
 Thomas, Norman, 21
The Times publishing of Counter-Letters, 179
 Tito, Josip, 12, 283, 304
 Todorov, Vladimir, 267
 Tokarev, V. D., 104
 Tolz, Vladimir, 277
 Tomlinson, Kenneth Y., 41
 Traichev, Cyril, 273*n*55
 Trans-Caucasus, audience research in, 75, 114
 Transcendental Movement, 234
 transistor radios, 32, 208, 309
 transmitters: in Germany, 7, 169; global network of, 33; in Portugal, 5, 7, 169; power levels, 56, 65. *See also* jamming
 Trotskyite–Bukharinite opposition, 301
 trust factor: in Poland, 136, 168; in USSR, 108–09, 113, 118. *See also* credibility
 Tikhachevsky affair, 302
 twilight immunity, 58, 62, 243*n*11
 Twining, Nathan, 285

U

Udre, Ingrida, 339
 Ukraine: audience reach in, 75, 76; listening patterns in, 114; Poles in, 304; religious programming in, 311–12; Western broadcast audience in, 288, 301, 314

Ulmanis, Guntis, 339
Understanding Media: The Extension of Man (McLuhan), 240
 undirected atmospheric noise, 245
 Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR): audience to Western broadcasts in, 67–101, 103–20, 142–44, 334–36; and Cuban missile crisis, 34; at ideological subversion seminar, 199; jamming by, 10, 27, 53, 132, 161; propaganda in, 290–93; regime perceptions of broadcasts, 409–37; regime responses to broadcasts, 10, 277–98, 520–61; regional listening patterns, 74–76, 114, 299–317; social change in, 285–90; Western broadcasting impact on, 97–100, 293–96. *See also specific regions, countries, and organizations*
 United States: and Bay of Pigs, 33–34; and Cuban missile crisis, 34; news from, 26–27; technology and science of, 27; transmission stations in, 33; and Vietnam War, 34–35. *See also specific organizations*
 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 230
 University of Vilnius, 310
 Untermeyer, Chase, 46
 Urban, Jerzy, 153, 158, 159, 163
 urban listeners, 74, 75, 82, 89–90, 312
 U.S. Information Agency (USIA), 20, 31–32, 34, 37
 Usatov, Mikhail, 269, 270
 USSR. *See* Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
 Uzbekistan, Western broadcast audience in, 309, 537–41
 Uzunova, Rumiana, 260, 273

V

Vanags, Janis, 339
 variable heterodyne interference, 64

Verin, Velko. *See* Inkyov, Dimitar
 Vietnam War coverage, 27, 33, 34–35
 Vike-Freiberga, Vaira, 339
 Vishnevskaya, Galina, 23
 Vladimov, Georgi, 23
 Voice of America (VOA): audience demographics, 84, 134, 135; audience reach of, 70–73, 75, 115; in Bulgaria, 259, 262; charter of, 32–33, 37; on Chernobyl disaster, 97; in Estonia, 301, 305, 307; history of, 25–48; in Hungary, 243, 246; jamming of, 53, 309; and journalistic independence, 350; in Latvia, 319, 322–23, 325, 329; in Poland, 131, 132, 165, 170; policy coordination, 26; religious programming, 312; in Romania, 206, 207, 208; transmitters, 57; in USSR, 103, 112; in Uzbekistan, 309
 Voice of Free Hungary, 243
 Voice of Free Poland, 173
 Voinovich, Vladimir, 23
 von Doemming, Gerd, 46
Vox Populi audience surveys, 67, 67n2, 78–79

W

Wałęsa, Lech, 26
 Wańkiewicz, Melchior, 179
 Warsaw Uprising (1944), 15, 15n13
Washington Post on VOA broadcast policy, 40
 Watergate scandal, 27, 35, 48
 Weidle, Wladimir, 19
 Weiner, Amir, 299
 Weinstein, Allen, 47
 Western frontier (USSR), Western broadcasts to, 299–317. *See also specific regions and countries*
 West Germany: balloon operations in, 14n12; transmission stations in, 33, 169

White, R., 104
 Wiatr, Jerzy, 159
 Wick, Charles Z., 39, 40
 Wilson, Donald, 34
Window on America television
 program, 46
 Winiewicz, Józef, 196
 wire-broadcasting centers,
 174
 Wolf, Markus, 346
 Woodard, George W., 51
 word-of-mouth information, 83–
 84, 90, 96, 345
 workers in RFE audience, 233
 Wróblewicz, Henryk, 201
 Wyszyński, Stefan, 174

Y

Yeltsin, Boris, 24, 47
 Yugoslavia: local radio
 rebroadcasts of VOA programs,

 27; RFE broadcasts to, 12; and
 Stalin, 283
 Yurasov, Vladimir, 19

Z

Zachariev, Metodi, 273*n*55
 Zalite, Indulis, 332, 334
 Zambrowski, Roman, 158
 Zamorski, Kazimierz, 189
 Zdravomyslov, A. G., 104, 109
 Zharov, A., 170, 171
 Zhivkov, Todor, 265, 269
 Zhukov, G. K., 284, 293
 Zhukov, Yuri, 297–98
 Ziemelis, Juris, 332
 Zinn, Reuel, 48
Żołnierz Wolności journal, 156,
 163, 164
 Zorin, George, 48
 Zorthian, Barry, 32
 Zvagulis, Peter, 319

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